

India Now

September, 1984

Monthly News Publication of Indian People's
Association in North America (IPANA)

This PDF is prepared by Sukhwant Hundal in memory of his father
Shivdev S. Hundal and mother Harbans Kaur Hundal.

Source: Sukhwant Hundal's personal collections

N.T. Rama Rao Dismissed by Gandhi Appointee

Rama Rao Takes 162 MLAs to Delhi

KISHAN BAJWA

Telugu Desam's President NT Rama Rao's government in Andhra Pradesh was dismissed on August 16 by Governor Ram Lal on the ground that Rama Rao had lost majority in the assembly. Rama Rao and 175 others were arrested for a brief period when he protested his dismissal and contested governor's claim that he had lost majority. Rama Rao asked the governor to convene the assembly on August 18 to test his strength; this request was also dismissed. Governor Ram Lal instead asked Bhaskar Rao to form a ministry. Bhaskar Rao was the finance minister in Rama Rao's ministry; he had organized a triumphant welcome for Rama Rao on August 14 on Rama Rao's return from US following a bypass heart-surgery. One of Bhaskar Rao's supporters Mrs. N. Rajkumari made news by washing Rama Rao's feet as he alighted from the aircraft. An hour after the ceremonies, Bhaskar Rao and his supporters resigned from the cabinet saying they were "fed

up with the Chief Minister's dictatorial attitude." Rama Rao apparently came to know about Bhaskar Rao's designs, and expelled him from Telugu Desam for anti-party activities. Bhaskar Rao is being supported by Indira Congress which has 58 seats in the 296-member assembly.

The news of dismissal of Rama Rao's ministry came as a shock wave to people in India as well as Indians abroad. Most could not believe the news. Opposition leaders characterized Rama Rao's dismissal as a coup by Indira Gandhi and called for a strike and protest. Lal Kishan Advani of Bharatiya Janata party commented, "it is not a change of government. It is a coup d'etat." Madhu Dandavate of Janata party called the action "blatantly undemocratic." Charan Singh of Lok Dal warned, "Democracy in India is in danger. ... Mrs. Gandhi can tolerate

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N. T. Rama Rao, who was dismissed as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, arriving in New Delhi to press case for his rule.

Over A Million Protest "Breach of Democracy"

Ram Lal Resigns Amidst Public Outrage

KISHAN BAJWA

Over a million people staged rallies all across India as a part of a nation wide general strike organized on August 25 by the opposition parties to protest against the breach of democracy as reflected in government actions in Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir and lately in Andhra Pradesh where Telugu Desam President NT Rama Rao's majority government was dismissed by Governor Ram Lal. The strike had maximum impact in opposition ruled states where public transportation was totally shut down, shops, and offices were closed. According to the Associated Press, at least 49,000 opposition party activists were jailed in Tamil Nadu for picketing government offices. Thousands of demonstrators were detained in other states also. There were also reports of clashes between paramilitary forces, police and the protestors. Over 50 people were hurt in police baton-charge in Bom-

bay. Activities came to a complete halt during the protest in Karnataka and West Bengal.

Ousted Chief Minister of Andhra and Telugu Desam President, NT Rama Rao told a rally of 100,000 in Vijaywada "our movement will not stop until we get justice and democratic values are accepted." Rama Rao had announced to hold six days of mass meetings starting on the protest day which will demand an early convening of the assembly. Rama Rao added that he would abide by the decision of the assembly.

On August 24, Ram Lal resigned as the Governor of Andhra amidst heavy criticism. According to opposition leaders, Ram Lal's resignation was a move to shift blame for Rama Rao's dismissal and mollify his critics. According to a general

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Elections Boycotted in South Africa

KISHAN BAJWA

The Indian community as well as the so-called mixed race population in South Africa overwhelmingly boycotted the recently held elections to the triracial parliament. Despite heavy government pressure, propaganda, and security provided by the government, only 18% of the eligible voters in the Indian community and people of the mixed race turned out at the polls.

The elections were protested and demonstrated against with the police firing on protestors and arresting them en masse. Hundreds of people were hurt. About 20 journalists covering the event were whipped and beaten. A 9-year-old Indian girl, Sayedah Nosarka, was beaten on the thigh. The police did not spare even kids.

Blacks in 3 townships in the province of Transvaal also protested and boycotted classes. Police in the Indian town of Lenasia surrounded a minibus carrying some students; it smashed the windows and beat the students inside. Over 500 demonstrators gathered there to protest the exclusion of black people in the election.

The triracial parliament was constituted last year by the apartheid regime to win support among the western nations for its policies as well as in an attempt to divide the non-white community. There are 800,000 people of South-Asian origin in South Africa, 2.8 million of mixed race and over 20 million blacks. The new constitutional change provides limited representation to Indians and people of mixed race through a separate chamber for each community which will have no effective power, but it does not provide any

representation to the black majority.

Ever since the white minority approved this constitutional change, there have been protests and demonstrations against this move by the non-whites. An alliance, the United Democratic Front, was constituted a year ago to oppose the constitutional change.

The Natal Indian Congress, founded 90 years ago by Mahatma Gandhi, which enjoys considerable support among the South-Asian community, has played a leading role in the United Democratic Front in opposing the triracial parliament. The Natal Indian Congress has rejected the new parliament as bogus and another way to divide the downtrodden. Its leaders have courted arrests on numerous occasions.

Few months ago, Congress rejected a call by a group of industrialists from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh that the South-Asian community should enter the triracial parliament. In response to a call by industrialists, the national executive of the Congress said, "Surely they should realize that South Africa belongs to all, and any attempt to impose the rich and affluent in government without regards to the millions of downtrodden and poverty-stricken black South-Africans is but a recipe for disaster."

It is suspected that the industrialists issued a call because they wanted to have trade and other business relations with South Africa. They would be in a better position to mount pressure on their respective governments once the South-Asian community inside South-Africa had accepted the new triracial parliament.

CFU Wins Right for Mushroom Workers

The Labor Relations Board recently granted the Canadian Farmworkers Union (CFU) the right to represent the workers at the Langley Mushroom farm. The LRB also ordered the owner of the farm, Harbhajan Uppal, to reinstate 5 women workers - Jasbir Kaur Sagoo, Balwinder Kaur Jandoo, Suninderjit Kaur Bath, Jasbir Kaur Brar, and Sukhdarshanpal Kaur Mahli - with full back pay. The LRB found the owner Uppal of contravening the Labor Code when he fired the five workers after he had discovered that they had joined the CFU. Despite Uppal's claim to the contrary, the LRB found that it was more than coincidence that Uppal fired the workers the same day the union applied to the LRB to represent his employees. The LRB granted the union automatic certificate finding that the union had recruited more than 55% of Uppal's 14 employees at the time of its application.

Commenting on the LRB ruling, the CFU president Raj Chouhan said, "We finally got it. This is wonderful. We are ecstatic." He added that the LRB's decision is heartening to the CFU's campaign to organize the Fraser Valley's berry and mushroom farms. Chouhan said that he would notify Uppal that the union intended to negotiate a first collective agreement.

The employees at the Langley farm told the Vancouver Sun that they joined the union because they received no overtime pay, holiday pay, medical insurance or adequate toilet facilities. The day after the CFU applied to represent the workers, the workers and 5 mushroom pickers were fired. The farm owner fired

another 6 workers who joined the union organizers on a CFU picket line in front of the farm. Union members were threatened and one picket was assaulted in which several young men armed with baseball bats shouted racist insults, smashed the headlights and windows of a picket's car.

Those six workers were reinstated on June 8 after the CFU shut down the Fraser Valley Mushroom Cooperative with a picket line honored by the cooperative's 85 employees, and members of the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Workers Union. However, they were not granted backpay by the LRB.

Based on a story in the Vancouver Sun

Unionist Acquitted of Assault Charges

Sarwan Boal, the secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Farmworkers Union, was acquitted on August 9 of assault charges in a retrial in Vancouver Provincial Court. Boal had been taken to court by Boylan and others of CPC(ML) who had tried to disrupt the rally on Oct. 17, 1981 in Vancouver by the British Columbia Organization to Fight Racism and other organizations against the Ku Klux Klan. The case was originally heard in July, 1982 at which time Boal was convicted. That conviction was appealed twice before being overturned by the BC Court of Appeal.

Indira Gandhi: A Grave Danger to Democracy and India's Unity

Daya R. Varma

The last ten years have amply demonstrated that democracy and Indira Gandhi are incompatible. To the extent there is democracy, to that extent Indira Gandhi has been too weak to suppress it.

First, it was the state of Emergency of 1975. It took some times to settle down. Then came military intervention in Assam and Punjab. The power of Indira Gandhi's money and intrigue has spared the people of Kashmir and Andhra the crude military intervention; Indira Gandhi's agents could buy a few members of Kashmir and Andhra assemblies who were too cheap for her purchasing power. If the late Jai Prakash Narayan was an excuse for the declaration of the emergency, then extremism has been an excuse for the genocide against Naga and Mizo people and military interventions in Assam and Punjab. And while all this goes on, there are arguments to find faults with the prey and not the predator.

As many are happy at the conquest of Amritsar, and as quite a few are appalled at the communal division among Hindus and Sikhs, let's face the question squarely. Do the people of Punjab have the right to seek greater autonomy? If West Bengal can, if Kashmir can, if Tamil Nadu can and if even states under Indira Congress rule can, why not Punjab? A demand for a greater autonomy is not a demand for Khalistan just as a demand for greater autonomy in Kashmir is not a demand for merger with Pakistan. It is Indira Gandhi's actions which made the first one synonymous with Khalistan though it was only a demand of a very few in the beginning and it is her supporters who want to make movements in Kashmir and Assam appear as movements for India's disintegration.

Do the people of Punjab have their right to demand better prices for agricultural produce, control over its export and lower prices for fertilizers and seeds etc., or should they wait for Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, etc., to catch up with them before they voice their demands? Whatever be the correct answer, is there any reason why a demand which can win large scale following should not be seriously negotiated by the government? It is no accident that in the absence of any secular progressive force channeling the demands put forth by the Akali Party as the demands of the whole Punjab that religious forces gained dominance. That is what Indira Gandhi wanted in order to

launch full scale invasion of Amritsar and military control over the entire Punjab. Even people who say that Indira Government had no choice, agree that she could have taken steps to avert this tragedy. However, they prefer to blame Khalistanis as the prime cause and not the government.

The apparent success in Punjab only encouraged Indira Gandhi to intervene in Kashmir first and Andhra Pradesh later. The turn of other states is in the corner and then of all of us. As Indira Gandhi's government denounces the use of extra-parliamentary methods of solving political problems, she uses these very methods to topple the legally elected governments in Kashmir and Andhra.

Indian rulers are determined to force upon us a centralized autocratic government so that economic growth for the benefit of a handful of industrialists can proceed in total disregard of the balanced economic development of various regions and currently, in relative disregard of the agricultural sector. However, the very process of economic growth, no matter how unbalanced it is, has let loose forces which are bound to demand a greater control over resources on regional and national basis. The popular slogans of these demands may take the form of cultural identity, language issues, religious equality or political autonomy. This is an irresistible development. The multinational multicultural realities of India and its uneven economic development cannot be wished away.

What happened in Punjab may appear to save India's integrity. But this may well be the beginning of its disintegration. The recent ousting of the Chief Ministers of Kashmir and Andhra is merely a frosting on the cake. India does not belong to Indira and her cronies. It belongs to all people of India, all its regions, languages and religions. India's integrity can be maintained only by respecting these diverse but unifying sentiments. And Indira Gandhi is enemy number one of India's integrity and democracy. To preserve both, let all regions and nationalities, people of all languages and religions unite against autocratic and undemocratic rule of Indira Gandhi. If not, India will be the next Philippine and Indira Gandhi its Marcos.

After Punjab and Kashmir, Now Andhra

V. Kumar

The ouster of the Andhra government of N.T. Rama Rao by the foulest, unconstitutional and most illegal means possible shows that Mrs. Gandhi's arrogance knows no bounds. The means that were employed to overthrow Farooq Abdullah in June were used with a slight twist against Rama Rao. Instead of taking advantage of family feuds, as in Abdullah's case, this time she used the Chief Minister's absence during illness to purchase legislators belonging to his party. Even a fig leaf of constitutionality has been dispensed with. The Governor acted essentially as a police havildar following orders. So far, it appears that the tactic has backfired as evidenced by the resignation of Ram Lal. What new tactics could or would be employed to keep Bhaskara Rao and his bunch of turncoats in power can only be guessed at at this time.

The history of center-state relations in India, especially during periods of Mrs. Gandhi's tutelage at the center, has not been a smooth one.

After the break-up of the old Congress party in the late 1960s, the ouster

of the regional party bosses belonging to the "Syndicate" and the virtual enthronement of Mrs. Gandhi in the Prime Ministership, her authoritarian tendencies towards the states became more pronounced. States where her party had the majority were treated as dumping grounds for politicians willing to act as her errand boys. No regional political leader of any stature, caliber or character has been allowed to survive, let alone grow, since he or she could conceivably interfere with the Gandhi cult of personality and the "India is Indira" type of image.

In states ruled by opposition parties, Mrs. Gandhi has generally shown to have had only one objective: the overthrow of the elected government there by any means, legal or illegal, constitutional or unconstitutional. In fact, her history of operation in this regard goes back a long time to 1959, several years before anyone thought that she would one day emerge as India's Prime Minister. At that time Pandit Nehru had made his daughter Con-

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AN APPEAL

Unite to Oppose Indira Unite to Save India

DAYA VARMA
KISHAN BAJWA

Dear Compatriots,

India is passing through difficult times.

A tragedy of immense magnitude has been inflicted on the Sikh community. What attitude we adopt towards this will influence what awaits all of us in times to come.

The Indian government has so far gotten away with their actions in Nagaland and Mizoram. Indira Gandhi got away with Assam and now we got Punjab. We did not rise to express our united opposition and she promptly dismissed the popularly elected governments of Kashmir and Andhra. If Indira Gandhi is allowed her course, the emergency of 1975-77 may well prove to be a stage rehearsal for a full scale dictatorship in India.

We are told that Indira Gandhi had no choice but to launch a full-scale attack on Harminder Sahib to clear out extremists. But is this really true? Sikhs were demanding what is being demanded by each and every national, regional, linguistic and cultural entity of India. They did not refuse to negotiate on demands many of which are demands of the whole of Punjab. On the other hand, Indira Gandhi refused any meaningful negotiations and in fact, repeatedly sabotaged them when a possible agreement was in sight. She branded the demands for a greater autonomy by raising the bogey of Khalistan. She also brought in the 'foreign hand' as yet another pretext for not resolving the issues.

Indira Gandhi first manipulated Bhindranwale to divide the Sikh community and when he emerged into a figure outside of her control, she used him as a pretext to launch a full-scale suppression of Sikhs with a brutality rarely witnessed on the part of a government against its own people. What has she done following the army assault? Despite her propaganda of the healing touch, events in the last three months amply demonstrate that Indira Gandhi is, on the contrary, throwing salt into the wounds.

This is not the first time Indian government has used bullets instead of negotiations to deal with popular aspirations. The linguistic division of Tamil Nadu and Andhra or of Maharashtra and Gujarat was not allowed peacefully either. Indira Gandhi has only taken this practice to a new low and each time it gets worse.

Is it any surprise that if the demands of people are not met through peaceful agitation, extremists elements will appear on the scene? In the case of Punjab also, once the peaceful agitation met a stonewall, it was inevitable that gun-toting extremists arose to fill the vacuum created by the lack of meaningful negotiations. Indira Gandhi took no serious steps to curb the rise of extremist violence. Instead, she fostered and thrived on the fear of insecurity and terror created by extremists to divide the population instead of resolving the problem. Each and every one of her action prior to the army attack on the Golden Temple and subsequently has exacerbated the divisions within the community.

Extremism is a bye-product of a large scale repression and is then invariably used as a scapegoat for further repression. If it is true in the case of Sri Lanka, it is true in the case of Assam and Punjab, and it is true elsewhere. Putting blames on extremists is like blaming the symptoms of the fever without figuring out the causes of a disease.

There is nothing exceptional about Punjab and Sikhs. Neither it was true before nor it is true now that all Sikhs are

fundamentalists and out to dismember India. Today, Indira Gandhi and handful of Hindu chauvinists have branded virtually every Sikh a Khalistani. If they oppose the military takeover of the Golden Temple, they are Khalistanis. If they oppose violation of human rights in Punjab and elsewhere, they are Khalistanis. Indeed, if they do not show gratitude to Indira Gandhi for what she has done, they are Khalistanis— but there is no such Sikh and there ought to be no such Sikhs. Indeed there ought to be no such Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

Compatriots, although far away from India, we can still do something to save India and that we must do.

But to save India, we need a united stand. And for a united stand, we need to share the grief and anguish of the Sikh community and protest the injustice done against them. If we fail to do so, then our call for the unity of the community and our call for communal harmony is like a carrot while Indira Gandhi waves the stick.

If we are for a secular India, for unity between Sikhs and non-Sikhs, for unity between people of all languages, religion and nationalities, and above all for the unity and integrity of India, we must all join a common platform to oppose Indira Gandhi. It is not the Sikhs who are threatening the integrity of India — they demanded something which deserves serious consideration, it is Indira Gandhi and her reliance on army power, her constant attempts of dirty politics and manipulation, her use of Hindu chauvinistic tactics, her lust for autocracy, and her connivance to establish a dynastic rule in India, that is threatening the integrity of India. It is not the extremism of Sikhs but extremism of Indira Gandhi that will lead to the disintegration of our motherland. So, let us build a united opposition to the massacre in Punjab and demand: (i) immediate removal of army from the Golden Temple, (ii) an immediate end of the army rule in Punjab, (iii) restoration of all political freedoms in Punjab, and (iv) a serious and sympathetic negotiations on Punjab's demands.

Either we express our patriotism to Indira Gandhi or to the people and nation of India. We cannot do both. Let us be the ambassadors of people of India and let us join millions of our people in their fight for democracy and human dignity.

National Media's Reaction

The national press was vehement in its criticism of Governor Ram Lal and has implied that Gandhi was behind the action. The Indian Express said, "The lights are going out over the country and fascist tendencies are manifesting themselves. With governors acting as puppets, the so-called presidential system is here with the insolence of arrogant power. We have been warned." According to the Statesman, "NTR's dismissal is a blow to the system, ... that Mrs. Gandhi will tolerate democracy only so long as it offers no opposition to her supremacy. The message deserves to be remembered at the hustings."

The normally pro-government Times of India carried a rare-front page editorial saying "Sack the governor" and advising Gandhi to get rid of Ram Lal if only to "absolve herself of the responsibilities for the performance of her appointee."

Abdullah Calls for New Election

KISHAN BAJWA

The ousted Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir and National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah said in a press conference in Varanasi on August 18 that the Jammu and Kashmir assembly should be dissolved immediately and a fresh election should be held there to determine whom people support.

Commenting on the policies of Indira Gandhi and her government, Abdullah said, "I see the danger of military dictatorship in the country due to the policies of Congress government." He also added that a wide consensus had already been arrived at among opposition parties on the manner of forming a common platform against Indira Congress. Earlier, speaking to a gathering of his supporters on August 10 in Srinagar, Abdullah charged that "the army and paramilitary forces have been amassed in Kashmir." He added that "Gandhi was pursuing a divide-and-rule policy" and that "she had already divided Sikhs and Hindus in Punjab and is now attempting to divide Muslims in Kashmir."

CONVENING OF ASSEMBLY

On July 30 when the Jammu and Kashmir assembly was convened to test the strength of Gulam Mohammad Shah's government, legislators supporting Shah and members of Indira Congress physically evicted Speaker, Wali Mohammad Itoo, of the house in protest against the speaker's ruling disqualifying 13 of their members from participating in the session. Itoo was lifted from his chair by the legislators and pushed out of the Assembly after he sought to overrule a motion moved by the ruling party legislators expressing a lack of confidence in him. Later on, Shah's supporters and Congress(I) installed a Congress(I) member Mangat Ram as the speaker; following that a confidence motion in support of Shah's government was passed. The entire opposition led by Dr. Abdullah had earlier walked out of the house in protest against the action on the speaker Itoo.

Earlier Abdullah had alleged in a press conference that 40 armed men which included leaders of the state Congress(I) unit on the night of 28th July made an attempt on the life of some of his former cabinet members and also tried to kidnap some party legislators.

Current Situation in Assam

Hiren Gohain

A popular journalist with a facile pen has a few months ago floated the official line that the history of Assam has always seen a sharing of power between non-Aryan kings and Aryan officers! Saikia has since duly appointed caste-Hindu favorites in coveted positions in the bureaucracy. They in turn are helping him to win over the press barons, the 'eminent' intellectuals and the capitalists with local color with miscellaneous bribes and gifts. Saikia is therefore gaining ground as a 'true-blue' Assamese, the last bastion of the Assamese against the onrush of the mians (immigrant Muslims) and the Bengalis. While the politicians in the Congress(I) camp belonging to the minorities are restive for a bigger share of the cake, they have not been able to mobilize mass support as Congress(I) style of politics precludes mass politics except for exhibition purposes. Besides, with the police officers and their underlings slaving over the booty they now control thanks to Saikia, they have no reason to disturb the minorities. (The police invariably pick up the wrong men when investigating murders or other outrage committed by lumpen elements in the Assam movement, and release them only after they cough up a substantial bribe.) Recently a so-called national daily applauded Saikia for the security he has managed to provide

for the minorities. It is a grim indication of the bankruptcy of our press that the editorial has conveniently forgotten the fact that a sense of security has been bought at the price of insecurity and unease for the Assamese.

POLICE STRANGLEHOLD

There is a terrible state of affairs with the police having a stranglehold over public life. Every three months or so the 'Disturbed Areas Act' is given yet another extension over large areas in the State. In the name of investigation of police run amok, Mukuni Bala Rabha, a widow in a Goalpara village, was shot dead as she tried to protect her children from police brutalities at her own home. In the towns it is nearly impossible for any opposition group or party to bring off successfully a meeting. Apart from the rigmarole of permission, anyone making a critical reference to the 'Man of the Nation' (Saikia recently was given this award by some Delhi group or body) and his team is likely to be taught better manners by the police baton. Very rarely one happens to see a procession of faithful leftist workers spiritedly jogging along with police jeeps at the front and the rear of the procession, most effectively insulated by this

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Government in No Mood to Deal with Punjab Problems

Army Rule Continues

KISHAN BAJWA

The situation in Punjab remains tense 3 months after the army assault on the Golden Temple in which over 1000 people and over 100 army jawans were killed and many thousands injured. Punjab is still under the army rule with the army commanders playing an decisive role in its administration. The army has fanned out into the rural areas allegedly looking for extremists. This disruption has resulted in further alienation of the Sikh masses from the army. The army officers have reportedly been approaching the Hindu families in villages to get information about the alleged militants, playing an extremely dangerous game by dividing the communities. Despite demands from the Akali Dal, the head-priests of the the Sikh religion, opposition parties, intellectuals and the media, the army has not been withdrawn from the Golden Temple either. There are no indications that the government is planning to do so in a near future. As a result, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) is not willing to start kar sewa (voluntary service) to repair the damage done to the Golden Temple complex.

Thousands of Akali activists and other people are still in jail. Hundreds are arrested whenever the Akali Dal announces any form of agitation or meeting to protest government actions as was the case when Shahidi Jathas were marching to the Harmandir Sahib in late July and early August to stop the army and government stooges from performing kar sewa and to demand the withdrawal of the army troops as well as prior to the All World Sikh Convention scheduled on September 2 which has been banned.

Numerous rumors are afloat as a result of press censorship and active government propaganda machinery which only a few take seriously. There have already been two hijacking incidents; luckily they have not resulted in any loss of life but have definitely further strained tense relations between Indian authorities and Pakistani authorities because of the bullying attitude of the Indian government. Despite numerous demands, the government has not established any independent commission to inquire into the incidents prior to and after the army assault. Nor the opposition parties have tried to conduct its own investigation to counter government's propaganda. The opposition has either agreed with the government's version of events in Punjab or at best has disagreed and questioned it on minor issues such as opposition's role. The government's white paper does not reveal any new information and though carefully worded, is an indictment of government's policies (see an accompanying story). In short, Punjab is bruised, humiliated, grieved and divided with no one to look towards for help.

ANOTHER FUNDAMENTALIST PROMOTED

To add fuel to the fire, the Gandhi government has not spared any efforts to further alienate Sikhs. The Sikh community is being divided by promoting fundamentalists such as Baba Santa Singh, who has been brought to the lime light out of nowhere. His followers have been allowed to parade through the streets of Amritsar brandishing arms; when the government is talking so much about not ever allowing arms to be taken into the religious places, they have been permitted to carry their arms into the Golden Temple. The government has made Santa Singh in charge of the kar sewa program; according to one eyewitness account, any one who wishes to perform kar sewa at the Golden Temple must get permission from Santa Singh's office.

Congress(I) even organized a public meeting for Santa Singh to which people

from distant places were trucked and where Akali and SGPC leaders were denounced. When the head-priests of the Sikh religion called for a convention of Sikhs to discuss and resolve issues related to the damage to the Harmandir Sahib and their repairs, the government banned the convention and arrested hundreds of people in preventive detention. The NSA has been further strengthened so that those arrested under its provisions can be held without trial for 2 years now. The new Terrorist Act further empowers the government officials to use laws according to their whims.

The government has indicated that it is going to restructure the SGPC which will definitely be seen as increased interference in the religious affairs and gurdwaras by Sikhs. There are even indications that the gurdwaras may be taken under control by the government authorities or a government picked body. This is how the authorities are providing the healing touch to the wounded Punjab.

DELHI SUBVERTS AGREEMENT ON WITHDRAWAL OF ARMY

Journalist Kuldip Nayar revealed in an article that the SGPC offered to state in writing that it would not allow the Golden Temple to be used as an arsenal or a refuge of terrorists, but it insisted on the army vacating the temple complex immediately. The SGPC also agreed to consider army commanders' demand that some of the army personnel be kept inside the Temple in plainclothes following which kar sewa would have been undertaken under the auspices of SGPC and temple authorities. But after the commanders returned from Delhi where they flew to get approval to their proposal, they changed and insisted that the army's presence would have to be visible and in uniform.

GANDHI REVERSES HER STAND ON CIA INVOLVEMENT

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi reversed her earlier positions and denied on August 6 that she had linked US government to the Sikh extremists in Punjab. Several newspapers had published on August 6 a United New of India's account of Gandhi's speech the previous day in which she had accused a Washington based espionage agency for backing Sikh extremists. An official spokesman said that the Prime Minister had been wrongly quoted. The reports of Gandhi's speech had reportedly caused a furor between the American Embassy in India and Prime Minister's office and Foreign ministry.

After the army attack on the Golden Temple in June, the army had reported that it had found many weapons many of which had American and Chinese markings. Subsequently senior government officials, especially from Chandigarh, had directly accused the CIA for its support and involvement, and perhaps masterminding the plan. Gandhi while directly accusing Pakistan, had also later indirectly accused US of helping the extremists. (The earlier reports of foreign arms been recovered in large quantity in the temple complex were also contradicted by other officials.)

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO EXTEND PRESIDENT'S RULE

The Parliament passed a constitutional amendment with an overwhelming majority to extend President's rule in Punjab for 2 years till October 1985. The opposition walked out of the parliament to protest government's handling of the Punjab situation. In January 1983, many political pundits and legal experts as well as most of the media had come to defense of

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Can Democracy Survive Indira Gandhi?

Sekhar Ramakrishnan

[The following is the text of a leaflet distributed by IPANA members at the Independence Day parade in New York this year.]

While we celebrate India's Independence Day with a parade, our Prime Minister celebrated it by overthrowing the legal government of Andhra Pradesh. She is busy destroying our democratic institutions, fanning religious conflict and tearing India apart.

DISRESPECT FOR DEMOCRACY

Indira Gandhi's party lost the elections last year in Andhra and Jammu & Kashmir. But she has not allowed NT Rama Rao or Dr Farooq Abdullah to stay in power. First she shifted the governors of the two states; then she sent Jagmohan to Srinagar and Ram Lal to Hyderabad. One is a family crony and the other the most corrupt chief minister Himachal has seen, who had to resign last year because the stink was too much even for Indira Congress. These men have dismissed Farooq and NTR without even a show of strength or of no confidence in the Assembly. Is this how a governor functions? As an agent for New Delhi, to promote the buying and selling of MLAs?

PROMPTING RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

Under her father and M.K. Gandhi, Congress was a secular party representing all castes and religions, even if not all the people. Indira Gandhi is appealing to the most communal sentiments in the Hindu community. In Punjab, she has gone all out to humiliate the Sikh community by the military assault on the Golden Temple, killing over 1,500 people, and the subsequent army rule. It was Zail Singh who first promoted Bhindranwale and his fanaticism in order to divide and weaken Akali Dal, without regard to the consequences. All through the Akali agitation, she refused to come to any terms that the Akali leadership could accept honorably; she pushed the agitation into the hands of the fanatics. The army actions in Punjab have done more to promote Khalistan than Bhindranwale ever did. Now, she is

promoting another fundamentalist, Santa Singh, to further divide the Sikhs.

In Jammu & Kashmir last year, she ran an anti-Muslim campaign. The dismissal of the Abdullah government this year has alienated more Muslims. In Maharashtra, her government watched as Shiv Sena goons rioted against Muslims in and around Bombay. Those arrested have now been released and Shiv Sena helped the chief minister in the MLC elections.

TEARING INDIA APART

For many years, the tribal areas in the Northeast have been under army rule and alienated from India. Assamese have now come to feel the same way. She ordered elections in the midst of talks with the agitation leaders, aggravating tensions and shifting the army to election work, leading to the worst massacre in recent times.

Her actions in Punjab and Kashmir have alienated more communities from the country. The latest toppling move in Andhra will surely make more people ask why they should be part of India if it means being suppressed by New Delhi.

A FAMILY DYNASTY

Indira Gandhi wants a family dynasty. First, it was Sanjay and after his timely death, it is now Rajiv. She has reduced a party with leaders from all parts of the country to one named for her and run by a family mafia with additional crooks and sycophants from all over.

WHAT DO WE WANT?

Do we want a Nehru family dynasty? Or, do we want to preserve our democracy? Do we want to promote Hindu chauvinism? Or, do we want religious harmony and tolerance? Do we want authoritarian rule that will lead to the breaking-up of our country? Or, do we want to promote national unity?

Friends! If you agree with what we have said here, show your concern by protesting the appearance of Indira Gandhi's representatives here.

Forum for Communal Harmony

During the last two months, some concerned Indo-Canadians with the help of representation from various organizations are regularly meeting in Vancouver to discuss the maintenance of communal harmony in the community. As a result, they have formed A FORUM FOR COMMUNAL HARMONY.

PREAMBLE

For the first time in 80 years of the history of our community in Canada, we are faced with more serious and disturbing developments which are threatening the harmony and unity among our people. During these 80 years, our people regardless of religious and language differences have stood and struggled together to fight British colonialism and to defend their rights against racial discriminatory policies of the Canadian government. Today, this age-old tradition of harmony and unity in our community is being destroyed. People are being divided along religious labels. Hate and violence are being propagated.

Recognizing the grave dangers in these trends for our people, many concerned members of the community, individuals as well as representatives of various organizations have come together and formed A FORUM FOR COMMUNAL HARMONY.

The events in Punjab have deeply hurt the feelings of our people in our community. Their anguish is legitimate. Their anger is legitimate. The forum for communal harmony has come to exist in order to ensure that the anguish and anger of people is not misdirected to promote discord, disharmony, hatred and violence in our community.

OBJECTIVES

To preserve and promote communal harmony and Hindu-Sikh unity in our community.

TASKS

To regularly monitor the situation in our community.

To provide comfort and support to those who may become victims of communal hatred and violence.

To undertake public activity in order to promote communal harmony and unity.

To promote reasoned and rational dialog in the community in order to counter such tendencies which threaten harmony and unity.

To assure full freedom of expression in the media and otherwise of social, religious and political views without any fear of intimidation.

The forum can be contacted at

P.O. Box 2252
New Westminster BC V3L 5A5

Assam Activists Arrested

On 23rd June, Prof. Anil Barooah, Secretary of the Assam State Unit of the Indian People's Front, and an executive member of the AAGSP, was arrested from his house under the NSA. Hundreds of AASU and AAGSP activists have also been arrested. Organizations leading and supporting the Assam movement called upon patriots and democrats all over India to raise their voice against this autocratic attitude of Saikia government.

World Sikh Meet In New York

V. Kumar

A new organization of Sikhs living abroad held a day long meeting on July 28, 1984 in Madison Square Garden, New York City. This new organization, called the World Sikh Organization, was organized in the aftermath of the Indian Army action on the Golden Temple, Amritsar. Testifying to the deep feelings of hurt and estrangement provoked in the Sikh community everywhere by this action carried out on Indira Gandhi's orders, the meeting was dominated by the more extreme elements calling for a new state of "Khalistan." A retired Major-General of the Indian Army, P.S. Bhullar, was selected as Secretary-General of the WSO at the meeting. An estimated 2500 persons attended the meeting.

Meetings of Sikhs Abroad

A two-day international meeting held on June 23 and 24 at Espanola, New Mexico, and organized by Yogi Harbhajan Singh, condemned Indira Gandhi government for the desecration of the Golden Temple and other temples and called for an independent inquiry into the assault on the Golden Temple. The conference was attended by over 130 representatives from Britain, Canada, Malaysia, Hong Kong, West Germany, Mexico, Iran, Singapore and US, representing mostly Sikhs of non-Indian origin.

Another meeting attended by representatives of the North American Akali Dal, the Sikh Council of North America and gurdwaras was held in Stockton, California. According to the North American Akali Dal President Sukhminder Singh, the meeting had a historic significance since it was the same gurdwara where the Gadar movement in support of the Indian independence movement was launched. According to Sukhminder Singh, many Sikhs, even the moderates, had begun to believe that their faith and religion could be best preserved in an independent sovereign state. He added that it was Indira Gandhi who was pushing Sikhs to demand Khalistan; he went on to add, "She has broken the backbone of Indian unity and has broken the trust even the most moderate Sikhs had in Indian unity." Sukhminder Singh said that his group did not attend the meeting in New Mexico organized by Yogi Harbhajan Singh because of Yogi's policies. He added, "We have nothing against American Sikhs, but Yogi in the last two or three years had been very close to Indira Gandhi and Giani Zail Singh. We hope he has changed now, but we shall wait and see."

Public Meeting in Delhi

Urmilesh

On June 29 Delhi saw a public meeting organized by the "Preparatory Committee to Oppose Military Intervention in Punjab." The committee includes various democratic organizations and individuals, mainly, Socialist Party, Indian People's Front, Samta Sanghatana, PCC, CPI (ML), Chatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini, Hind Mazdur Kisan Panchayat, etc. The meeting was chaired by Kuldeep Nayar.

VM Tarkunde, PUCL leader and eminent jurist, said that a negotiated settlement was possible in Punjab but this possibility was destroyed by Mrs. Gandhi's government. He demanded immediate withdrawal of the Army from Punjab and of press-censorship. Brahm Prakash, a political activist, accused Mrs. Gandhi for her communal and despotic policies in Punjab, and said that using the army was a dangerous beginning.

Maheep Singh, an Hindi writer and Sikh intellectual exposed the so called "free" nature of Indian Press. He said from Hindi to English, all the National dailies have played to the tune of Mrs. Gandhi.

Gyani Bhajan Singh, leader of the Akali Dal (Longowal group) Delhi, said that it was Mrs. Gandhi who acted

Protests at Independence Day Celebrations

Independence day celebrations in India and abroad were marred with protests and violence. In India, August 15 was mourned in many states. Indian People's Front called on people to observe August 15 as a black day to protest against the "autocratic rule of Mrs Indira Gandhi."

Thousands of people came to streets in Srinagar to protest the recent dismissal of the Farooq Abdullah ministry by Governor Jagmohan; there were reports of pitched street battles with security forces in which 3 people died and over 200 injured. Students also hoisted black flags in the city which were later removed by the police. In Andhra there were protests against the dismissal of NT Rama Rao's government by Governor Ram Lal despite that it had a majority in the assembly.

In Punjab, there were many protests and demonstrations against the army assault on the Golden Temple in which over 1000 people were killed. Lecturers and students of Punjabi University in Patiala reportedly wore black turbans and black duppattas in response to a call by the Akali Dal to observe August 15 as a black day.

Assam's capital Gauhati gave a deserted look with all shops closed in protest against the government's plan to hold elections in the state on the basis of 1979 rolls. In Tamil Nadu, the government cancelled all ceremonies and observed the anniversary as a "mourning day" for the killings of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

In North America, hundreds of Sikhs demonstrated outside Indian consulates as well as various functions to protest the army action in the Golden Temple. There were reports of demonstrations from Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington D.C., Chicago, New York and other cities.

In New York city, events turned violent when some Sikh youths try to dismantle some floats and stages being used in India Day parade. The police arrested at least 29 demonstrators for disorderly conduct who were later discharged. Over a 1000 Sikhs wearing black turbans and long black scarves and raising black flags had their own protest march from 56th street the place from where the India Day Parade had originated. Violent incidents were reported from Toronto also which resulted in the arrest of 20 people. Earlier, Acting Indian High Commissioner in Canada was greeted with eggs and protests when he visited Winnipeg in Canada.

Many leaders of the Sikh community in North America have denounced the rowdy and disruptive behavior of certain fanatic elements within the Sikh communities in letters to various newspapers. According to them, the Sikh community should direct its anger against the Indian government in a manner so that it is most effective and is able to win support of other communities. In no way, members of other communities should be targeted or harassed.

against the nation and not the Sikhs. He made it clear that his party never favored a separate State (Khalistan).

HMKP President and MP, George Fernandes, said that Mrs. Gandhi is acting against the nation and there is growing danger of reimposition of Emergency.

Kuldeep Nayar said that the Government had not been keen about a political solution to the Punjab crisis. On May 12, the External Affairs Minister had asked him and others like Air Chief Marshal Arjun Singh (Retd) and Lt. General Jagjit Singh Aurora (Retd) to try and help find a solution. The Minister said he was speaking on behalf of Mrs. Gandhi. Nayar said he and others tried their best to find out some solution and they drafted a concrete proposal. It was handed over to the Minister on May 13 but the Minister never commented on the proposals.

Prof. Dalip S. Swamy of Delhi University condemned the army operations.

Operation Jagmohan

KISHAN BAJWA

What happened on July 1 night in Srinagar had been rehearsed many a times before ever since Dr. Abdullah was elected to power. These rehearsals took place even during BK Nehru's tenure but somehow cast was never complete. The needed 14 sell-outs could never be bought. It has been reported that at least on two occasions, the governor was kept awake until well after midnight waiting for the arrival of GM Shah's loyal band but it failed to materialize. In the last week of December, the highest number that yet another Gulam of Master Indira could mobilize was only six.

Not only that, Governor Jagmohan usurped the reins of the government well before Farooq Abdullah was dismissed on the afternoon of July 2. The defectors from the National Conference telephoned Jagmohan around 11:30 PM on July 1 informing him that 12 of them had broken with Abdullah and pledged support to GM Shah. They wanted to meet the governor immediately. Jagmohan told them to come the next morning, but the defectors were so frightened they wanted to spend the night in the Raj Bhavan itself so that they could parade themselves before the governor in the morning. They told the governor that Abdullah might come to know the whole thing and thwart their plans. He could advise dissolution of the assembly or organize mobs against them.

Jagmohan is believed to have told them that they could be looked after wherever they were staying. The defectors spent an uneasy night at a house not far from the Raj Bhavan and as the day broke, huddled into a Matador van and drove to see the governor at 5:30 AM to return only after they were sworn in as ministers in GM Shah's government late in the afternoon of July 2.

Even before meeting Shah's supporters or Dr. Abdullah next morning on July 2, Jagmohan stayed up all night preparing for a change in the administration. Jagmohan had called Delhi, met Lt. General ML Chhibar of the Northern Army Command, seeking security reinforcement and stand-by arrangements. A battalion of the Madhya Pradesh Special Armed Police on anti-dacoity duty in the Chambal region was flown to Srinagar. They had been informed to be ready to move to a cool place even before the split took place. In all this, Dr. Farooq Abdullah,

who was the Chief Minister, and every other legitimate authority in the government was deliberately ignored.

And, Jagmohan could not have done this without the knowledge and consent of the center. Jagmohan had visited Delhi only a few days earlier and the stage had presumably been set for operation topple then.

Abdullah met Jagmohan a little before 7 AM and was shocked to find out that the defectors whom he had seen the previous day had withdrawn their support to him. Abdullah advised Jagmohan to convene the assembly immediately where the strength of the two sides could be tested, or to dissolve the assembly. Jagmohan did not pay any heed to all this, and instead swore GM Shah as the Chief Minister.

In an article entitled "Philosophy of Kashmir Operation," Balraj Puri wrote about the implications of what happened in Srinagar.

"The outlines of an emerging philosophy of national unity and security is discernible. Notice has been served on all geopolitical peripheral sub-national identities to submit and conform to the neo-nationalist mainstream or to be crushed through any means, extra-legal or amoral.

"The spectre of external threats, the destabilizing efforts of foreign powers, secessionist movements on the borders and fissiparous tendencies everywhere — imagined, real or exaggerated — is being used to scare that section of the nation that presumes to be its mainstream. If that happens, it can be trusted to provide the requisite political sanction for the new philosophy, necessitating a strong State, a strong center, a strong leader, and so on. Assassinating Farooq Abdullah's character, sowing suspicion about his patriotism and cutting the Kashmiri identity to size acquire a meaningful role in furtherance of this philosophy and in providing a testing ground.

"The extra-stringent and chauvinistic tests of patriotism that have been applied to Kashmir have thus clear implications far beyond the troubled valley. They have a vital bearing on the future of Indian nationalism, federalism and democracy..."

(based on a Press Release by the former Education Minister of Jammu and Kashmir and articles in the Indian Express)

Bhiwandi Riots and Cong(I) Factionalism

A delegation led by Central Minister of State for Steel NKP Salve said that the intemperate speeches of Shiv Sena Chief Bal Thackeray was one of the causes of the May riots in Bhiwandi and Bombay. According to the delegation, people of the affected areas told them the riots were not communal but rather they were politically motivated.

According to a report in the Far Eastern Economic Review, a top state Congress leader told the Review's correspondent Salamat Ali privately that the pattern of the riots showed that they were pre-planned and Patil's government was forewarned and did nothing to prevent them. It was also reported in the Review article that the infighting inside the Congress(I) government may have been one of the major causes of the rioting.

The alliance between Shiv Sena and Patil's faction within Congress(I) was also reflected in Shiv Sena's support to his candidate Dajiba Patil as the deputy chairman of the state legislative council.

Earlier on that very day of election, the Maharashtra government ordered the release of prominent Shiv Sena leaders detained for inciting communal tension. The new Deputy Chairman reportedly not on-

ly thanked the Sena for supporting his candidature, following his election, but also went on to touch the feet of the Sena MLCs in the lobby.

The infighting within Congress between supporters of Patil and those opposed to him who include Antulay, Bhosale, and Adik, was reflected in the government initiated relief programs also. The central government made Antulay chairman of the riots relief committee, though Chief Minister Patil had formed a relief committee of his own. Both committees functioned from the government secretariat adding to the annoyances of Patil whose supporters accused Antulay of being behind the riots to destabilize the state government and stage a comeback.

The loss to public and private property as well as business establishments in the 11-day long riots in Bhiwandi and Thane towns in May is estimated to be Rs 2 billion. Because of rioting and subsequent curfews, few people could come to over 300,000 powerlooms, which account for nearly one-third of the total number in the country.

Despite numerous demands, Patil has refused to set up an independent inquiry commission into the riots.

Interview with Abdullah



[Following excerpts are taken from an interview of Dr. Abdullah that appeared in India Today.]

Q: Many people think that you were taken by surprise by the withdrawal of support by 12 MLA's. Even your intelligence set-up had failed to forewarn you.

A: I was not surprised at all. I knew that it was going to be come about some day. Only thing I was hoping was that these people will not sell themselves. They came to see me on 1d day here when they had already signed the letter withdrawing their support.

Q: Do you think that Congress(I) paid people to topple your government?

A: Maybe it is possible. The Congress(I)'s basic aim is to come into power in this state which decisively rejected them in the last assembly elections.

Q: You and your party maintain that your dismissal is unconstitutional. Can you elaborate on it?

A: Under our own constitution, the governor is bound by the chief minister's advice. It was done in 1977 when Sheikh Sahib was leading a minority government. The whole assembly was dominated by Congress(I). Sheikh Sahib went to the governor only after he lost the support of Congress(I). Today when I do the same thing, Delhi says nothing because Delhi can do anything and still get away with it.

Q: But your opponents believe that your dismissal has not evoked massive protest in the state.

A: What do you want them to do — burn India?

Q: What is your reaction to Congress(I) charge that your government was not taking any action against anti-national elements in the state?

A: They want to malign me in the eyes of the people of the rest of India and isolate me from them. They did not spare my father. They dubbed him pro-Pakistan, pro-America and what not. They are doing the same thing now.

Q: Do you feel that the governor was responsible for your dismissal?

A: Not exactly. I think he has been overpowered by New Delhi.

Q: What are your important achievements as state's chief minister?

A: I don't know. I don't know if in a year there can be any achievements at all. My major contribution was to bring Jammu & Kashmir into the national mainstream.

Q: You had very good relations with the Gandhis who were instrumental in catapulting you to chief ministership after Sheikh Sahib's death. What suddenly went wrong?

A: Because we just did not agree with each other. They wanted enough assembly seats so that I would be at their mercy. Farooq Abdullah would never form any government at anybody's mercy.

Q: But even after the elections, attempts were made to sort out problems. What happened after that which turned Congress(I) against you so violently?

A: I don't know that. Soon after our return from Saudi Arabia, we wanted to call on her. But the tragedy with Mrs. Gandhi is that the people who surround her, feed her with all sorts of information. She never got correct information about Jammu & Kashmir.

Q: Can you identify those people who are surrounding Mrs Gandhi and giving her wrong information?

A: Unfortunately, I don't know what I have done to Mr. Fotedar who is now in the prime minister's camp. And Mr. Arun Nehru. I don't have anything to do with Arun Nehru but yet he is my bitter opponent there.

Q: What is your future course of action?

A: I am going to the people in the villages, in the streets. We will consolidate our support at the grassroots. After that I will move out of the state and go to the other parts of the country to expose the central government.

Q: Will you try to regain majority and form a government?

A: I will not adopt the stupid methods which others have done. Farooq Abdullah will never stoop low just to get power. I may be a stupid politician, but India has to change. I will fight it out.

Q: Do you think that Congress(I) is following anti-national policies?

A: Yes, their policies are not in the national interest.

INDIA NOW

Writers: Kishan Bajwa (national scene), Chin Banerjee (race relations), Delores Chew (women), Tania Dasgupta (Toronto), Javed Mirza (New York), R.N. Raju (national scene), V. Kumar (analysis), Daya Varma (analysis).

Production: Shyamal Bhaumik, Nikhil Desai, Abha Sur.

Business Manager: Pradip Sen, 514-931-4728.

Editor: Sekhar Ramakrishnan (712-866-1616)

Comments and Views

Need for Realization

Gursharan Singh

It is being said throughout India that Punjab needs a healing touch, but there is a greater need among the religious communities in Punjab of realization:

Our Hindu brothers and sisters need to realize that:

- If they are living in Punjab, then they must adopt its culture and language. This language and culture belongs to everybody equally.

- Not army, but mutual understanding guarantees their safety. They should not follow few irresponsible elements, rather should give examples of those incidents when they left their villages and those who went after them to bring them back.

- Military action which took place in Harminder Sahib complex was not something to be proud of. It was an action of irresponsibility and madness. To capture a few fanatics, thousands of innocent people got killed and many army jawans got killed needlessly. A holy place was badly damaged. Many valuable books and handwritten documents were destroyed. To glorify this military action, the army generals responsible for it and "Durga Rani" (Indira Gandhi) who gave the orders, is totally irresponsible.

- The army was not sent to protect them. For the last 3 years, they were being killed here and there and no body came to protect them at that time. Sending of the army was not meant to protect them or to preserve national unity but to make sure to secure their votes during the next election.

Our Sikh brothers and sisters need to realize that:

- One reason for the damage to Harminder Sahib is that certain undesirable activities were taking place there which should not have taken place.

- The issues of Punjab can be raised from a common platform. If all the Hindus do not realize there are some who do. Then there are also Harijans, Muslims and Christians. All need electricity and water. All are frustrated by and fed with up the corrupt administration. But when agitations are being run from religious places, the demands of the agitation can only be seen as though of members of one religion.

- There are many broad based fronts present today to raise political issues. The politics becomes very narrow when raised from the confines of gurdwaras and its consequences can never be good.

- In India, discrimination is not being faced by the Sikhs but rather by all of the poor; it does not matter which religion they belong to. The cause of discrimination is economic not religion or region. If discrimination was based on religion, then Giani Zail Singh would not have been the president of India and Mohinder Singh Gujral would not have been the general manager of a large corporation like Coal India. The issue must be seen in proper perspective.

THERE ARE STRUGGLES TAKING PLACE ALL OVER INDIA TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR. ONLY THESE ONGOING STRUGGLES CAN GUARANTEE THE WELL BEING OF ORDINARY PEOPLE INCLUDING SIKHS AS WELL AS HINDUS. LET US JOIN HANDS AND INTENSIFY THESE STRUGGLES.

translated from Samta, August 1984.

Let Us Begin A New Chapter on Our Land

Gursharan Singh

Harminder Sahib is full of bullet holes. Punjab is full of bullet holes. Sikhs throughout the world are anguished. To a certain extent, we all are responsible for what happened, but even then it is necessary to point out the main culprits; only then we will be able to walk on a new path in the future. Let us point our finger to:

SANT BHINDRANWALE who attempted to reverse the wheel of history in this twentieth century. He was a religious fanatic who harbored not only those who were willing to give their lives for their cause and fanaticism, but also murderers, smugglers, thieves, dacoits, and goons, capable of doing any heinous deeds.

SANT LONGOWAL, TOHRA, etc. who could see what was going on but were too concerned with their narrow political interests to speak out. What was going on in Harminder Sahib under the guise of the agitation was fully known to them but they neither denounced it nor did they inform the people about it. They covered it all up by calling it 'government's conspiracy.'

INDIRA GANDHI who is the head of a corrupt political system, who does not know how to resolve any issue other than by using brute force. Indira Gandhi was well aware of the whole plot and the political gains, but she waited until she was sure that she could reap the maximum political benefits from the situation. First,

let the cancer spread, then operate on it and come clean among the people. By hurting the feelings of an important religious minority in the country, she has hurt the national interests to such a degree that it can never be repaired. SHE HAS

DONE THE GREATEST DISSERVICE TO THE NATION.

But despite all this we have to go on with our lives. We have to fulfil our obligation to life. We have to go on with our struggle with a new determination. We have to go on fighting for a system:

- under which there is no repression and exploitation,

- where reason is supreme, where there is no blind faith, belief in imaginary god and goddesses, which gives rise to this blind faith. This blind faith has caused religious fanaticism that is responsible for so much human suffering and numerous killings. If this blind faith can be uprooted, then it can be said with confidence that human beings will guide their lives with a scientific philosophy and be capable of analyzing various events around them leading to success.

If we can understand the true objective of life, we can overcome the foolishness that has caused so much grief in Punjab in the last few years and resulted in the loss of thousands of precious lives. Let us begin a new chapter in the life of our country.

translated from Samta, July 1984.

Rajni Kothari and other Intellectuals

According to many intellectuals, Indira Gandhi might have created more problems for her as well as for India as a whole as a result of her unwillingness to resolve the Punjab issues peacefully earlier and later forced to take army action. Prof. Rajni Kothari, a political scientist in the Delhi University, said "I do not see any solution around the corner until Mrs Gandhi is out of power. The Akalis will never trust her. If a man like Khushwant Singh says no self-respecting Sikh will go and see her for months, you can imagine what politicians will say."

Econ. & Pol. Weekly

"...The question has been asked whether there was any alternative to the army action. The answer to this question must necessarily take the form of a counter-question: at what point of time? If one is thinking only of the eve of the army action on June 6 or a few weeks preceding it, it may appear that there was indeed no alternative to what has happened....

"The Prime Minister has now spoken of the need for the 'healing touch' but against the background of the events which led to this week's tragedy, how seriously is she to be taken? The 'healing touch' in today's context means above all the speediest end to the army rule in Punjab, release of all arrested Akali leaders and enabling the Akali Dal as well as the Sikh community's other vital institutions, such as the SGPC, to start functioning. The prospects are not bright of the government moving in this direction on its own. It will need to be pushed by public opinion, but then will political parties like the Lok Dal and the BJP be able to rise above immediate narrow political calculations, any more than Congress(I)."

Frontier

"It is too early for Mrs Gandhi and her government to call it a victory. The army action is bound to lead to a more serious and protracted complications, not only in Punjab but also elsewhere though the Hindu vote will be boosted in view of the emergence of Mrs Gandhi as another 'Iron Lady'— for the second time in 9 years. Bhindranwale had an undeniable mass appeal because of his 'fundamentalism'. Had Mrs Gandhi made it clear to the Akali Dal that the Golden Temple and other shrines would not be spared, most Sikh leaders both moderates and 'extremists' would have had second thoughts and the awful tragedy might have been avoided. The ambiguity of the Government is to a large extent responsible for what has happened—details of which are not authentic because of censorship of news emanating from Punjab. But what can be said is that the second round of talks would be tough. Sant Longowal and his followers would be in mood to resume negotiations over the dead bodies of their colleagues."

Retired General Jagjit Singh Aurora

In an interview which appeared in the New York Times, the retired Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora, who commanded the Indian troops during the Bangladesh war, expressed his bitterness and anguish over the army action on the Golden Temple. He strongly advocated for a healing touch quickly to prevent a permanent alienation of the Sikhs from central authority in New Delhi. According to General Aurora, the military action was done with competence and care. He criticized Indira Gandhi and her congress party for first building up Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale as a counterweight to the

Eye-View of Punjab

Sharad Joshi

...At the time of the Asiad, in November 1982, all those bearded and turbaned were clumsily treated by the security forces. It was then that the Sikh started feeling that he was not exactly like others but in fact an alien. That each individual member of a community which sacrificed more than any other for securing and preserving freedom was presumed to be a traitor unless proved to the contrary came as a rude shock. The process of alienation made a big leap following Operation Blue Star and it threatens to become complete in no time if we continue to treat the Punjab problem out of its socio-economic context....

The essential cause of the Punjab unrest is the Government's approach to economic development which is one of generating the surplus required for industrial capital formation principally by suppressing agricultural prices. The Punjab unrest is only a reflection of the overall India-Bharat divide.

The magnificent green revolution and the much tom-tomed opulence of the Punjab farmer are relegated to oblivion. Over a third of Sikh farmers live below the poverty line. Punjab certainly made the largest strides in agricultural production, marshalled the new technology, started deploying the full range of inputs,

Akali Dal in the 1970's and early 80's. According to Aurora, Gandhi's son Rajiv had praised Bhindranwale as 'a man of religion' as late as in April. The General predicted that a long occupation of Punjab by the Indian army would spread even deeper disaffection among the Sikhs. He feared that with the national election expected around January, Gandhi might be disinclined to be generous to Sikhs. About Indira Gandhi, Aurora added, "She is very capable person, she has great staying power, but she has no warmth. She can be a vicious, cold and calculating person."

machines, fertilizers, pesticides, etc. The Government made loans easily available for financing the purchase of tractors, motors, pumps and inputs. The hardworking Punjab farmer was happy and made the country self-sufficient in foodgrains.

Now the chickens are coming home to roost and the Punjab farmer is realizing the economic consequences of the green revolution. The purveyors of agricultural inputs have prospered thanks to subsidies and loans. All agricultural producers are in serious trouble with an impossible burden of indebtedness, thanks to pricing policies....

If the Prime Minister is really serious about a 'healing touch,' let her start by scrapping the Agricultural Price Commission, by declaring a minimum wheat price of Rs 190 per quintal, the price proposed by the Electricity Tariff Enquiry Committee which was appointed at the end of the Chandigarh agitation and by agreeing to waive the agricultural indebtedness caused directly by inadequate prices. All other measures are doomed to fail unless the basic economic grievances of the farmer in Punjab, who incidentally happens to be Sikh, are promptly redressed.

Excerpted from the Indian Express

I am enclosing \$... to cover the following subscriptions:

FOR MYSELF

Name:
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FOR FRIENDS

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Address:

☐ Renewal ☐ New

Oppose the Divisive Attacks of Indian State

With the military attack on the Harminder Sahib, India Gandhi has taken her ruthless political opportunism to a level where the people of India are faced with an urgent choice: either to play into her hands by pursuing the tragic path of communal chauvinism and divisive hatred or to recognize their true interests and unite against her to fight for their democratic, political and economic rights.

WHO IS TO BE BLAMED?

The primary responsibility for the tragic events in Punjab lies with Indira Gandhi. She refused a political solution to the demands put forward by the Akalis and opted for a military solution. She stalled any political solution because that would have promoted the Akalis at the cost of her party's electoral interests in Punjab. She chose to keep the situation brewing because that would make the Hindus in Punjab look to her as a savior and win her the support of all Hindu chauvinists across India when she finally came down with a military solution. In the meantime, her party tried to weaken the Akalis from within by creating splits and promoting extremists. Many people have pointed out that Bhindranwale was promoted by none other than Zail Singh.

Can there be any doubt that Bhindranwale and his squad of killers were permitted by the Indian state to spread terror till it was politically opportune for Indira Gandhi to strike? Why were the extremists not apprehended earlier? How could they carry on their murders of innocent people moving so freely through the paramilitary cordon around Harminder Sahib? How could they build up such an arsenal as was found in Harminder Sahib? The tactics are quite clear: The Indian state allowed the fanatics and extremists to spread terror so that Indira Gandhi could strike a massive blow which would crush the Akalis, win the support of Hindu chauvinists, and by driving a wedge between the Sikhs and the Hindus which would make the situation so dangerous as to justify continuing state repression in Punjab. The attack on Harminder Sahib was not something Indira Gandhi was forced into: It was a calculated political act. And so far Indira Gandhi seems to have attained her objectives: The Sikhs are insulted, grieved, and alienated; chauvinistic and fanatical elements are manipulating this grief; Hindu chauvinists are elated; the opposition is nearly united in their support of the government's actions; and the government has a free hand in using the slogan of national unity and the bogey of foreign threat to divert people's attention from the real problems facing them.

Bhindranwale and his gang are now seen by many grieved Sikhs as martyrs who died for their faith. Many people who disapproved of the hate and violence propagated by Bhindranwale now think that in giving his life, he proved his truth. This is understandable though dangerous. The truth is that Bhindranwale, however, powerful he became, lived and died a pawn of Indira Gandhi's game of power. He created confusion among the Akalis; he was the instrument of spreading extremist terror by which the Sikhs and Hindus were divided; he made Harminder Sahib a hideout and an arsenal for terrorists and provide the state opportunity for its attack. Nor has his death ended his role. As long as Sikh can be confused in his name and turned to chauvinism, religious hate, and separatism, Bhindranwale will continue to serve the function he did when alive. The British ruled India by dividing people against themselves. The present rulers of India have also maintained themselves in power by dividing people on the basis of region, language and religion. Fanatics like Bhindranwale from various communities are the essential tools of this policy. Death does not make them martyrs; they are instruments who are discarded when no longer needed. Religious hatred they preached has never served the people. It has always and only served the rulers.

Harinder Mahil
Chin Banerji

The Akalis too are responsible. It is true that a number of the demands which they put forward in their agitation are legitimate political, economic, and religious demands of the people of Punjab including Sikhs. That is why they won people's support. But why did they not do anything about these when they were in power. After all these issues were not born on the day they lost the election. It is clear that when they found themselves out of power, the Akalis opportunistically adopted many long-standing grievances of the Punjab people but also distorted them by calling them Sikh issues in order to polarize the community and win Sikh votes. But having unleashed religious fanaticism, they had no control over it. They found themselves outdone by Bhindranwale whose 'extremist' supporters grew in number as their own support dwindled. They did not even have the courage to protest Bhindranwale's use of Harminder Sahib as an armed fortress and the headquarters of killers and smugglers. The Akalis are guilty because in order to serve their electoral interests, they have exploited the religious sentiments of the Sikh people and unleashed communal hatred. And they are guilty because they allowed Bhindranwale to carry on his activities from the Golden Temple.

CONSEQUENCE OF THE ATTACK

The Sikh community in India and all over the world is grieved and outraged by the attack on the Harminder Sahib. Many Sikhs now feel deeply alienated and see in the attack a confirmation of the Bhindranwale thesis that the Sikhs are an oppressed minority under 'Hindu Imperialism.' And this lends credibility to the notion of Khalistan, which has more supporters today than it ever did before. On the other hand, Hindu chauvinists have expressed their elation at the government's actions, and Hindu organizations abroad have expressed tacit approval by maintaining silence. Those too justify the feeling of anger and alienation among the Sikhs. A deep wedge has been driven between the two communities.

The most reactionary and opportunistic elements within the Sikh community in North America and Britain have jumped in to exploit the situation. Utilizing their access to the gurdwaras, which are the centers of social and religious life of the Sikh community abroad, they have directed people's grief toward the hatred of Hindus and the idea of Khalistan. The Sikh Federation of Canada passed a resolution calling for boycott of Hindu businesses. Hindu businesses were picketed in Vancouver; Hindu shops were harassed; windows were broken. Hindu businessmen were beaten up. Hindu newspapers were boycotted. A Punjabi paper, published by a Sikh who dared to express opinions critical of the fanatics, was thrown out into the street. People who have expressed any criticism of Bhindranwale or Khalistan have been threatened. A group called Dashmesh Regiment has claimed its existence in British Columbia. Hit lists have allegedly been prepared. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been raised in gurdwaras to promote Khalistan.

Just as the division between Sikhs and Hindus in India hurts the Indian people, plays into the hands of the ruling powers, and diverts people from their legitimate struggles, such a division within our community in North America weakens our ability to oppose racism and diverts us from our fight to achieve economic and political equality in this society. It is not surprising, therefore, that the people who are now trying to spread fanaticism in the name of sympathy for the oppressed Sikhs in India have shown no inclination to fight for the rights of our community here. Such people care neither for the people of India nor our people here. Their racist and anti-democratic activities hinder our community's efforts to establish itself as an equal partner in this society and they make us more vulnerable to racism and discrimination.

The issue of Khalistan which the religious fanatics and opportunists propagate is going to be with us for some time. Indira Gandhi has made sure of that. Although it has no basis in the economic, social and political reality of the Sikhs, in India, it has now some basis in their emotions. Among Sikhs living abroad, who in any case think of India in emotional terms rather than in terms of concrete economic and political existence, the idea of Khalistan is even more appealing. That is why Khalistan has always had more supporters outside India than in Punjab. Undoubtedly the idea also serves the interest of US imperialism because the balkanization of India along its border with Pakistan will weaken India while strengthening the US presence against the dominant role of the Soviet Union in the area.

Patriotic Indians living abroad who are genuinely concerned about the plight of the Indian people have the long and arduous task of opposing the notion of Khalistan and the religious fanaticism associated with it. We have to explain to our people that "Hindu Imperialism" is a myth because the Indian ruling class, though predominantly Hindu, have in it, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians and others, while the working class of India is also composed of people from various religions. A Hindu peasant or workers has the same interests and problems as a Sikh or Muslim peasant and worker. They cannot be enemies unless they are turned against each other by the ruling classes. A Hindu capitalist or landlord does not oppress a worker or peasant any less because he is a Hindu or more because he is a Sikh or Muslim. He turns them against each other when it is necessary for his exploitation. In British Columbia, the chief exploiters of Indian and Sikh farmworkers are Sikh farm-owners and contractors.

We have to point out that countries based on religion do not solve the problems of the people. Israel has not created a paradise for Jewish workers, especially from Eastern and African countries. Pakistan is a religious state; the workers and peasants there do not live in bliss. Religion has never served the ordinary people. Common people only have one hope, and that is socialism, not religion.

The Indian people have two choices before them: to follow the path of division in order to remain oppressed or to see through the tactics of the ruling classes, refuse to be divided on the basis of region, language, and religion, and wage a united struggle for freedom from oppression. And, we in North America have the choice of fighting amongst ourselves and selling out the future of our children or unifying to make sure that the generations to come can live in dignity and equality in this society.

IPF and Patnaik

We cannot support localism, parochialism, jingoism, religious blindness, communalism. We condemn with the deepest wrath:

- 1) Genocide within a temple complex, and neglecting the religious sentiments of religious minorities.
- 2) Deployment of army and creating tense situation thus creating communal tension.
- 3) The building of secession by Indira Gandhi herself in using Indian Army to depress every single nationality sentiment as it was evident in Assam and now in Punjab.

If there be any real secession in any part of India, the responsibility will be solely her and her policies.

Let us unitedly stand against every single repressive measure of this autocratic military regime and forge a genuine unity with equal rights to every community.

from National Alternative

Oppose Army Action in Punjab: Safeguard National Unity

Vinod Mishra
CC, CPI (ML)

The despicable attack on the Golden Temple and genocide of Sikhs by the Indian Army has created more problems that it could solve. Formerly, whereas only an insignificant minority among the Sikhs opted for 'Khalistan', now the entire Sikh community desires the same. Whether in India or abroad, everywhere Sikhs are demonstrating against the Indian government...

The Sikhs, who have always been upheld as the 'builders of modern India' and 'staunch soldiers of national integrity,' have all of a sudden assumed the distinction of an unpatriotic lot in government propaganda. How did things come to such a pass? Who is the main culprit behind these unfortunate events. These are the questions haunting the minds of every sober and patriotic Indian.

Dear countrymen, it was the wrong policies of the Congress party led by M.K. Gandhi which led to the partition of our beloved motherland in 1947. And now, the policies of Mrs. Gandhi are leading the country towards further disintegration. Even after 37 years of formal independence and despite a virtual monopoly of Congress rule at the center headed by 'strong personalities', communal clashes, caste wars, regionalism, religious fanaticism and separatism are intensifying day by day. India, the sacred land of all of us who live here, has been turned into a Hindu India, an India which has become the hunting ground for foreign imperialist powers, monopoly capitalists, landlords, private armies, lumpen politicians, and all the scum and dregs of society, a graveyard for the workers, peasants, youth who dare to fight for their rights, and a prison for religious minorities, backward nationalities and national minorities.

It was Indira Gandhi who for her political ends, refused to hold any serious and meaningful dialog with the Akalis, deliberately perpetuated the conflict between Punjab and Haryana and within Punjab between the Sikhs and Hindus. It was she who in her bid to counter the Akali Dal, first made a Frankenstein's monster out of Bhindranwale, encouraged and abetted terrorism to check the emergence of any powerful people's movement, and finally turned Bhindranwale into a martyr.

With Indira Gandhi at the helm of affairs, national unity is at stake. And the parliamentary opposition has proved itself as a worthless lot. Their task is to go on denouncing Indira Gandhi in 'ordinary time,' only to stand firmly by Indira Gandhi in times of 'crisis.' They have no independent voice and no effective program of their own.

The task of maintaining communal harmony and defending national unity has fallen upon the shoulders of revolutionary communists, all progressive people and genuine patriots. And this task is inseparable from the struggle for building a new India, a people's India, a democratic India.

Excerpted from National Alternative



Whither Assam Agitation?

The 12-hour general strike on August 14 in Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya and Mizoram called by the regional parties demanding early solution to the foreigners' issue evoked partial response. Police fired at a number of places.

The All Assam Students Union (AASU) and All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP), two major groups spearheading the Assam agitation for over 5 years, dissociated themselves from the strike. The reason given for this stand by their leaders, strangely enough, was that "we do not want politics to enter our activities." The leaders of the two groups appear to be sharply divided on the future of the five-year-old movement. It has been reported that there are sharp divisions within AAGSP, which may soon split. There are also reports of contacts between the central authorities and some of the leadership of the two organizations.

MEETING WITH GANDHI

For the first time since last year's massacre in Assam, AASU and AAGSP leaders met Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on July 24. They urged Gandhi not to hold elections in the state on the basis of 1979 electoral rolls which have not been revised yet. They argued that such elections would deny hundreds of thousands of young voters who had come of age since 1979, the right to vote along with conferring legitimacy on those who illegally entered the country.

In another memorandum submitted to PM, they attacked the state government

run by Gandhi's party and the Assam police for "their brutal, inhuman, and uncivilized behavior." The memo went on to add "democracy and civil liberties lie buried in Assam."

Both organizations had earlier boycotted Gandhi's visits to the state by calling general strikes. This was the first publicized meeting between the two organizations and the central government since the massacre in February last year.

ELECTION ON 1971 ROLLS?

According to the Telegraph, the center is seriously considering holding elections in Assam on the basis of 1971 electoral rolls. The chief election officer reportedly instructed deputy commissioners to prepare rolls by August 25. All opposition parties except CPM have favored the idea of holding elections on the basis of 1971 rolls. The AASU and AAGSP have not said whether they would accept the 1971 rolls. However there were reports in the press that leaders in AASU may contest elections if held on the basis of 1971 rolls. AASU leaders have said in the past that they have no political ambitions, but there is growing pressure on them to contest the elections.

Assam's Congress(I) Chief Minister Hiteswar Saikia said recently that holding elections on the basis of 1971 rolls would be unfair and unjust from all points of view. One of the major reasons for his opposition is that acceptance of 1971 rolls would undermine the legitimacy of his government.

Government's White Paper: Self-Indictment

KISHAN BAJWA

The 196-page white paper issued by the Gandhi government on events in Punjab is a severe indictment of government's own policies. As was to be expected, the paper blames the Akali Dal, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and extremist elements abroad and in Punjab for the events in Punjab. Those who have closely followed the events in Punjab and government's past accounts of events would soon find that the government's propaganda that the state of Khalistan was to be declared in the Darbar Sahib by Bhindranwale and recognized and given vatican-like status by US, China, and Pakistan, has been belied by its own white paper. The only way the government could justify its earlier claim that what was happening inside the Golden Temple was a grave threat to national unity and if the army action had not been taken, India would have been disintegrated, is by quoting speeches of fanatics living in England, Canada and US and by referring to the presence inside the Golden Temple complex, of those who claimed themselves to belong to the National Council of Khalistan. As the authorities themselves had earlier rightly acknowledged that only a handful gave any attention to these fanatics, the government could not find any direct evidence that any Akali leader including Bhindranwale supported the formation of Khalistan. It would be wrong to say that the authorities were sleeping when the media were printing similar stories about fanatics; instead, it is an indication of the fact that despite trying very hard, the government does not have a good case for its accusation so it had to resort to evidence it had summarily rejected or ignored in the past. Skeptics only need to examine the character-assassination of Dr. Farooq Abdullah unleashed by Congress(I) leaders on baseless grounds.

The white paper elaborates on the often-repeated accusations of the government officials that the Golden Temple Complex had been converted into an arsenal and a hideout for criminals and anti-social elements, and that a large quantity of weapons had been smuggled into the temple through kar sewa trucks. Prior to the army attack, Amritsar was infested with paramilitary forces including the Border Security Force and the Central Reserve Police with their maximum presence being felt near the Golden Temple and Kotwali in Amritsar. Amritsar had never seen so many security personnel. How come the security forces let the criminals enter the Golden Temple after committing hideous crimes and allow arms to be smuggled into the Golden Temple? If the government had information that kar sewa trucks were being used to carry arms into the temple, why were those trucks and vehicles not stopped and examined?

Few days after the army attack, the government spokesmen had talked about recovering a large cache of foreign arms and ammunition as well as heroine, narcotics and drugs inside the Golden Temple complex which were allegedly being used for buying arms. The squabbles within various services and intelligence divisions which were trying to put the blame on each other for the mess in Pun-

jab's administration have revealed that most of these "discoveries" were either blatant lies or implanted. For example, a BSF spokesman firmly denied the story released by the Press Trust of India quoting army sources as saying that a large amount of heroin and other narcotics were found from inside the Golden Temple. Later, embarrassed army and government spokesman also repeated the denial and even forced the PTI to do so. At the same time, detailed inspection of captured weapons has also proved that a majority of these are of Indian origin.

As to the charge that the Akalis kept on changing their demands and were not willing to negotiate in good faith, one only has to look at the records. Even mediators including Swaran Singh of Congress(I), Harkishan Singh Surjeet of CPM, Inder Kumar Gujral, journalist Kuldeep Nayar, and others have categorically denied this accusation of the government; instead, they have solely blamed the government and its representatives for changing stands on all occasions and backing out at critical junctures.

Earlier the authorities, including the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi herself, had blamed Pakistan and other foreign nations, indirectly referring to US and China, for instigating and supporting the extremists. The white paper is silent on the foreign bogey also apparently because the government does not have any evidence to substantiate its charge. The authorities could not find any evidence against Dr. Farooq Abdullah either whom Gandhi's cronies have been hounding like mad dogs for allegedly supporting Khalistanis and pro-Pakistani elements.

Realizing that Akalis, Bhindranwale and foreign-based organizations could not be blamed for everything, a Home Ministry's paper "The Army Action at the Golden Temple" indirectly blamed the state administration by charging that the terrorists "had all but made the state administration totally ineffective." President Zail Singh picked on this in his national broadcast and made Punjab's governor BD Pande and Inspector General PS Bhinder who were placed in charge following the imposition of the President's rule in Punjab in October 1983, as scapegoats. It has been reported that these accusations backfired because the Home Ministry, Gandhi and Zail Singh were being always kept informed of the events in Punjab and no decision (indecision shall we say) was made without having it cleared from the Home Ministry and PM's secretariat. The orders were coming from New Delhi and if at all, attempts by local authorities were being thwarted by central authorities who had adopted a wait and see attitude and were waiting for the right moment to strike when the Akali Dal had been completely wiped out as a result of infighting and a firm action would be to the maximum political advantage of Indira Congress. It is not Pande and Bhinder only, but also Prime Minister Indira Gandhi herself and all her cronies who must go, otherwise India, if not already, will be driven towards a disastrous path.

Govt Lashes out at A.P.

The Indian government charged that the correspondent of the Associated Press in India had "floated many false stories" about the situation in Punjab. In a statement issued in London, Indian government complained of inflated death tolls and reports that bound Sikh militants had been shot and that women and children had been among those killed. According to the Indian government, such reports were without foundation and that the intent behind them was mischief and malice.

The AP foreign editor in its New York headquarters denied the government charges and said that the Associated Press stands behind its reporting on the situation. According to the AP, it was the

only foreign agency to have a correspondent Brahma Chellaney in Amritsar at the time of the assault whereas reporters affiliated with foreign media had been asked to leave Punjab soon after Punjab was taken over by the army.

The AP had quoted that according to other military and government sources, the number of people dead as a result of the army attack was as high as 1000 not including over 200 army soldiers who were also killed. According to AP's own estimate, the number could be as high as 2000. According to official military sources, 492 extremists and 84 troops were killed.

India Under Indira Mme. Gandhi et le Pouvoir politique

— Punjab, Kashmir, Assam — The abuse of power and the use of force — La politique de force et de violence

— Bribery, Patronage & Communalism — The politics of corruption — La politique de corruption



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Tamils in Sri Lanka: Victims of Govt Violence

R.N. Raju

The lives of increasing numbers of the minority Tamilian population have been lost in the recent series of violent actions perpetrated by the Sri Lanka armed forces. The incidents that have occurred in the Tamil populated northern region of Sri Lanka represent an escalation in the political crisis that has dominated the island nation in the past year. They also represent the change in policy of the Jayewardene government in moving from all-party peace talks to dependence on the armed forces for a solution to the ethnic problem.

In August alone, the Tamilian population faced the gunfire of Sri Lanka armed forces in Jaffna, Kaithady, Chunnakam, Velvettithurai, Mullaithivu and Mannar. According to government's own report, the navy patrol boats opened fire on suspected Tamil militants on beaches around Velvettithurai and destroyed a number of fishing boats. At least 22 were killed, 11 wounded and more than 300 arrested in the towns of Velvettithurai and Mullaithivu. Reports said that more than 2000 people of Velvettithurai town had taken shelter in 5 schools as over 50% of the houses had been damaged in shelling by the security forces. Naval ships were also used to shell the coastal town. Among the buildings destroyed were a Hindu temple and a school.

On August 6, the security forces shot dead the owner and 5 employees of a restaurant in Vavuniya. The restaurant is located near the town police station where a few hours earlier, a superintendent of police was killed. The killing of the restaurant workers by the security forces has been said to be an act of reprisal. The next day, the almost one million Tamil population of the Jaffna area remained indoors as the government ordered a security crackdown to deal with 'increased terrorist activity.'

On August 12, 19 bodies of Tamils were recovered from an explosion wrecked building vacated overnight by the police in Chunnakam. More bodies from under the debris were being cleared by the public. Four of the victims had their mouths gagged and hands tied from behind. Tamil parties alleged that the security forces had locked up Tamil youths, left a time bomb and withdrew from the premises. The government agencies were conspicuous by their absence at the rescue operation.

On August 12 and 13, Sri Lankan soldiers were responsible for burning shops and firing on civilians in Mannar. More than one hundred shops were burnt and two civilians were shot dead. Officials in Mannar port said they saw soldiers setting fire to the shops. Eyewitnesses said that 30 soldiers arrived from a nearby military base at 4:45 am (local time) on the 12th. They looted a liquor store and set fire to the main bazaar. The soldiers shot a man outside his cafe and threw his body inside it to burn. A teacher was shot dead as he

peeped outside his front door. Reports said that the situation in Mannar was far worse than in Velvettithurai with only 4 to 5 buildings left intact in Mannar. The responsibility of the Sri Lankan soldiers for the Mannar attack has been established by the local enquiry conducted by the cabinet minister for transport, M.H. Mohamed.

During the same time, at least 10 alleged terrorists were slain and 9 captured when troops traveling in a convoy fought a gun battle with insurgents near Elephant Pass, a narrow strip linking the Jaffna peninsula with the main island, according to the Sri Lankan Defense Ministry. It was claimed that the army action was in retaliation for a bomb attack on the military convoy by Tamil militants. Fifteen persons were killed when the army was clearing 'road blocks' set up by the 'extremists' around the Chunnakam police station. According to Tamil political leaders, 16 Tamils traveling in a hired van were pulled out of it and gunned down by the security personnel at Kaithady. The victims, who included women and children were civilians traveling to Jaffna.

The Sri Lanka violence reverberated in the neighboring Tamil Nadu as well. On the night of August 2, 31 persons were killed and 24 were injured at the Madras airport when an explosion rocked the international arrival hall. Most victims were Sri Lankans who had arrived earlier from Colombo and were waiting for their onward flight to Abu Dhabi. It is believed that the explosives were intended for an Air Lanka flight but they did not get into the flight which left earlier that evening because no passenger claimed the ownership of the two baggages containing the explosives. The airport authorities were informed through anonymous phone calls about the explosives lying in the customs area but no action was taken to remove them and to warn the people present at the airport. From the investigations that have been made so far, the placing of explosives intended for the Air Lanka flight appears to be the work of some Tamil extremists.

As of now, killings and counter-killings continue unabated in Sri Lanka. The Tamil population is subject to the wanton killings of the Sri Lankan security forces. The isolated responses of Tamil militants to these killings have only served to fuel the governmental propaganda concerning Tamil terrorism. Meanwhile, the Jayewardene government has reportedly sought and obtained the services of Israeli internal security agency experts and Britain's elite Special Air Service to train the Sri Lankan security forces. The insecurity of life has forced over 40,000 Tamils to seek refugee status in Tamil Nadu. The longer the present situation continues, more Tamil lives would be lost and the process of a political solution will become increasingly difficult.

Left Front Demands Abolition of Governor

The Left Front government of West Bengal has called for the abolition of the post of governor in its reply to a questionnaire from the Sarkaria Commission on center-State Relations. In a memo to the Commission, the government said that it saw no purpose in the constitutional provision for a governor, title it described as "nothing but a legacy of imperialist administration" in states with democratically elected governments.

The memo added, "Most governors have tended to function according to pre-independence colonial tradition as agent of the center, faithfully carrying out the latter's bidding." It also suggested that if the post of the governor is to be retained, then the articles 200 and 201 of the Constitution should be deleted because the governors used them to serve the partisan interest of the union council of ministers. It further proposed that instead of the governor being nominated by

the union council of ministers, the President should select one of the three names suggested by the state legislature.

On the center-state relations, the 59-page memorandum proposed the formation of an inter-state council with Prime Minister as chairman and state chief ministers as members. The council, it said, should be mandatory and function as "pivotal element in the structure of center-state relations."

The memo suggested the states should be able to borrow publicly on their own while ensuring the same time that they did not exceed the limits of sound finance. Currently, as long as a state has a line of credit with the federal government, it has no right to borrow from any other source without its explicit permission.

Sri Lanka Government Must Stop Abusing Tamils' Human Rights

R.N. Raju

The Sri Lanka government has decided on a military solution to the island's ethnic problem. A large number of Tamils, men, women and children are being killed in cold blood, incapacitated and have their properties destroyed everyday by the security forces of Sri Lanka. The government is claiming that the actions of its armed forces are a response to Tamil 'terrorism' and containing this terrorism is its principal objective. This abuse of basic human rights of the Sri Lanka Tamils should stop now.

The ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka involving the Sinhala majority and the Tamil minority has been developing over the past many years. The demand for increased autonomy on a regional basis has been the main element underlying the ethnic crisis. The popularity of the demand was seen in the electoral victory of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) in the last general elections to the Sri Lanka parliament. President Jayewardene provided many assurances to consider the demand and work towards evolving a political solution.

During the past year, the Sri Lankan President called for an All Party conference to discuss the ethnic conflict. In addition to the political parties, important religious representatives were also invited to participate. The TULF took part in the conference. The Indian government played an indirect role in the conference through the work of G. Parthasarathy who held informal consultations with various groups in order to develop minimum acceptable positions among them. In these columns, the holding of the All Party Conference was welcomed and the necessity of achieving a political settlement to the internal problem was continuously emphasized. Although the talks made very slow progress, it was hoped that the talks would be continued and the Sri Lankan government would persist in achieving a politically negotiated settlement. Such hope has been rooted in the opinion that a political solution would be in the interests of long term internal stability of Sri Lanka which would contribute favorably to the interests of the region as a whole. Unfortunately, the hope have been belied and the Jayewardene government has taken an alternate path.

The development of Tamil militancy has been a direct consequence of the failure of the political talks as well as the impression that had been created of the government's unwillingness to address the issue. Important leaders of the government actively promoted Sinhala chauvinism publicly. Attacks on Tamils were approved. A natural Tamil response has been in the growing influence of the militant Tamil groups and the decreasing respectability given to TULF which had attended the All Party talks.

Another Black Ordinance

Indira Gandhi government assumed further powers on July 14 through the Terrorist Affected Areas (Special Courts) Ordinance promulgated by the President. The ordinance which extends to the whole country except Jammu and Kashmir empowers the government to declare any area as a "terrorist affected area" and set up special courts to try terrorists in camera. A notification declaring an area as terrorist affected area will remain in force for 6 months. It may also cover a period of 6 months prior to the date of notification. Under the ordinance, the onus of proving innocence lies on the accused. The new ordinance gives officials almost complete authority to arrest, prosecute and convict a suspected terrorist behind a wall of secrecy (see the accompanying article for details).

Many legal experts have warned that the new ordinance threatens to undermine basic democratic and human rights. The act is considered to be the most severe of the several passed in independent India's history.

Now the Jayewardene government is organizing itself for a kill. It has learnt from the Gandhi government in India how it can use the facade of dealing with the 'extremists' to execute political opponents. The Gandhi practice of 'encounters' against extremists has been given the shape of dealing with Tamil 'terrorists' by the Sri Lanka government. It has imposed censorship of news for the past many months. It has acquired the mercenary services of the Israeli internal security agency and the British Special Air Service to train its security forces. Looting, maiming and killing Tamils by the security forces is its way of solving the Tamil problem. It has completely abandoned the idea of any political resolution of the issue.

Public opinion in India and in many other countries have unequivocally condemned the violence unleashed by the Sri Lankan government. This violence should stop right now. Its continuation will only ensure the perpetuation of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Even now it is not too late to go back to the All Party Conference. However, the Jayewardene government has to act and demonstrate that it is serious about addressing the Tamil demands fairly rather than catering to linguistic and religious chauvinism of the majority community.

Congress(I) as well as some opposition political parties in India have periodically been demanding that the Gandhi government prepare an armed intervention into Sri Lanka in a way similar to its role in Bangladesh or to its armed annexation of Sikkim. But Prime Minister Gandhi has been publicly renouncing such a role for India until the recent weeks. However, in her Independence Day address, she argued that India could not remain a silent spectator given the influx of refugees. This was also the argument used earlier to justify the Indian role in Bangladesh and can therefore, be a cause of concern to all. Just as there are those in India clamoring for an armed intervention, many leaders of the Sri Lankan government have been pointing out to the threat of Indian intervention as a very real one. They have been using this perceived threat to completely divert the attention from the basic issue of increased autonomy demanded by the Tamils. It is in the interests of the people of the region that each country is permitted to solve its own problems without any external intervention. This can be achieved by Jayewardene government not through seeking military assistance from Israel, Britain or other countries but by first terminating the violent armed attacks on the minority Tamil population and then entering into serious political negotiations with them.

NSA Made More Stringent

Amidst uproar and confusion, the Lok Sabha passed on August 13 the National Security (second amendment) bill 1984 which extend the maximum permissible period of detention without trial to two years from present one year. Further, each of the grounds of detention have been made separate; the order of detention will not become invalid or inoperative because one or some of the grounds is or are vague, non-existent or irrelevant. The ordinance also provides that the expiry or revocation of a detention order shall not bar another detention order against the same person.

The opposition questioned the propriety of the way the deputy speaker G. Laxman put the motion at the final stage to vote even as some of them were trying to debate the bill. According to the Indian Express, so great was the din and so sudden was the deputy speaker's action on declaring the bill passed and adjourning the house that for a long time, it could not be ascertained if the bill had actually been passed.

The Best Contraceptive

David P. Haxton

[David P. Haxton is Regional Director of UNICEF for South Central Asia.]

Of all the factors that determine the size of a family, the first is the perception of the parents about the ideal number of children they should have. The poorer their circumstance, the more difficult the decision, the greater the need to look beyond the uncertain present into an unknown future.

Family size is the surviving strength in terms of grown up children. How many children are to be born is within the control of even poor parents. But how well they will grow is not. They may not live beyond the first few months or years. The freedom to make an informed choice in planning the family narrows as poverty deepens. There is however no option for the poor, for whom a surplus of fresh human stock is the only tangible capital that can be invoked. This, in outline, is the poignant story of child births trying to catch up with child deaths—a race that results in a steady rise in the number of lives and a parallel decline in the quality of life. Such is the quandary facing millions of families and therefore scores of countries.

Poverty does not vanish merely because family size is small. That in any case, is the experience of the poor. So they assume, and not without logic, that the larger the family the better its chances in coping with the environment of life. It is pointless to try to prove the poor wrong—for, insights into the logic of living are as open to them as to others. Rather, the value of a small family for enhancing the quality and meaning of life must be seen by poor in their own lives for them to believe in it. This represents the unmet challenge to public policy in all the countries bulging with populations.

Experience has repeatedly shown that attempts to lower the birth rate cannot be separated from the basic needs of the people who account for the high rate—their needs in essential nutrition, basic education, primary health care, shelter and sanitation—and to sustain all these a social environment supportive of employment and equity. In this matrix of basic needs and services, the priority, in terms of time and value, belongs to the protection and care of children born and being born. The argument is experimental as well as ethical.

The equation between child deaths and childhood diseases on the one hand and births on the other is a permanent part of parental consciousness, yet it is weakly linked in the theory and practice of public policies. Seen in the aggregate and as peculiar to a class of people other than ones own, nagging intellectual doubts persist. For example: Fewer deaths make a population to rise, so how will further reduction stabilize the number? Even if it does, will it not take too long for the good for the process of development? For their part, the poor too are entitled to ask: what if deaths decrease, and births too, but not disease? The answers belong together; for in the interplay of the many factors that affect child health and influence the fertility rate, one set of them cannot be isolated from the others.

In communities where child health has improved and infant mortality reduced, it has been easier to have birth spacing accepted. Longer intervals between births

Benefit Scheme for Child Workers in Sivakasi

UNICEF is funding a Rs 13.7 million project to strengthen a health infra-structural facility for the benefit of children and women employed in the match industries of Sivakasi and Sethur in Ramanathapuram district. Mobile medical vans for undertaking periodical health examination of children and to attend to emergencies would be provided. Mass immunization programs would be launched.

are the first step in the voluntary way to a small family. Birth spacing provides the breathing space for a couple to make up their minds. This is the time when public services and community support can demonstrate the familiar message that the health of both child and mother will be better with fewer and well-spaced births. A change in parental perception is the foundation of policy success.

Recent studies in several countries show a close relation between improved child health and a reduction in the number of births. Expectedly, the per capita expenditure on food decreases as the number of children increases. This apart, birth spacing has a positive impact on the duration of breastfeeding and the degree of maternal attention. The rates of infection are probably lower among children more widely spaced.

A recent analysis by the World Fertility Survey in 29 countries found that children born after intervals greater than four years had less risk of mortality than those born after intervals of two years or less. These correspond to earlier findings by World Health Organization (WHO) studies in India and elsewhere. A Princeton University research covering some 25 developing countries reveals interesting results: If all births were spaced at least two years apart, infant mortality can be reduced by 10% and child mortality (between one and four years) by 16%, for this reason alone.

Arguments do not convince the poor, only a visible change in the context of their lives can. Policy makers who seek to promote the small family norm have a moral responsibility to give that child who is allowed to be born the maximum opportunity for full development. It is not enough to see that the birth rate graph comes down, but simultaneously interventions to prevent morbidity and mortality of infants and children must go up and become part of the same program as family planning. And the concept of health promotion must go beyond the health sector to meet the threat to child life from wherever it comes, be it maternal malnutrition, infectious disease, iodine deficiency or water pollution.

The process of improving child survival starts with the parents as much as the decision to have fewer births. Services in family planning and maternal and child care delivered to a passive community may not be the best way to optimal results. The 'provider' approach neither gives the people the certainty that the present is secure, nor does it help to establish a link between current progress and future well-being, nor for that matter does it give people the confidence to intervene and control the environment of their lives. Whether the health and family planning services are rooted together in the community determines their durable success. Development — centered on the people and with a focus on maternal health, adequate attention during delivery, and the survival and protection of the child as its leading edge— is, perhaps, the best contraceptive.

Excerpted from the Indian Express

Sweet Jail

(continued from page 12)

mind not just as the immediate lived experience of the women and men who confide their own stories to us, but also as the story of an entire immigrant community placing its roots in the US and creating a physical and spiritual space for itself within the historical currents of the time.

Children Working in Miserable Conditions

Children between the ages of 5 and 14 constitute roughly 75% of the workers engaged in the carpet and yarn industries in Varanasi and Mirzapur districts of UP, and their eyesight would be "terribly affected by the time they attain maturity." The Chairman of the committee formed to study child labor problems in UP, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and West Bengal, and Gujarat's Labor Minister Sanat Mehta made these observations after visiting different urban and rural centers making zari sarees and weaving carpets in the two districts.

According to Mehta, the working conditions of these children were miserable and the system of indirectly contracted child labor was still prevalent. Children working in looms had to work in congested surroundings; there was hardly 3 feet space between the wall and looms while the ceiling was very low. The children in the carpet industry mostly belonged to the scheduled castes and backward classes and for the first 6 months, they were not paid any wage.

Mehta strongly condemned the exploitation of children for the sake of promoting any industry or earning foreign exchange and wanted abolition of child labor below the age of 14.



A young carpet-weaver from Bhadohi: "While the carpets are finished in factory sheds in carpet towns, they are woven almost entirely in the miserable, ill-lit homes of these children."

After Punjab

(continued from page 2)

gress party president. The undivided Communist Party had won the state elections in Kerala in 1957, and had formed the state government with EMS Namboodiripad as Chief Minister. For a variety of reasons, including currying favor with U.S imperialism at that time, the central Congress leadership decided to launch a toppling operation of the CPI regime. Mrs. Gandhi, as then Congress president, was in-charge of this task. The experience she gathered then has been systematically sharpened over the next quarter of a century in her toppling of opposition regimes from Kashmir to Kerala and Bengal to Haryana.

Although almost all these toppling operations involved the usual bag of political dirty tricks and the induction of gangsters of various hues and stripes into the political process, especially during Sanjay Gandhi's time, they were generally covered over with a constitutional wallpaper, giving at least some appearance of legality if not its substance. In the bizarre overthrows of the elected regimes in J&K and Andhra, this constitutional covering was completely dispensed with. In dismissing Rama Rao, the governor refused to even check whether what he was talking about had the remotest relation with the actual facts, particularly when NTR showed up in New Delhi with a solid majority of the Andhra legislators by his side. On Mrs. Gandhi's part, her contempt for the constitution and whatever democratic political process exists in India could not be clearer. Of course, it could be that she

overreached herself in Andhra and may be forced to back down if a sustained agitation against the NTR ouster makes the position of the turncoats untenable as seems to be happening. But one cannot doubt that the story will be repeated soon, most probably in Karnataka.

In effect what is happening is a combination of several factors. One is Mrs. Gandhi's well known authoritarian tendencies which were earlier manifested most acutely during the Emergency and are now being manifested in a new way in the current situation. The second is the unfolding of a strategy for the fast approaching elections. This strategy has involved, on the one hand, a bashing of the minorities, especially Muslims and Sikhs, and their portrayal as 'anti-national' in order to win majority Hindu votes in the backlash. On the other hand, it has involved the overthrow of opposition state governments in order to be able to capture the government machinery on the eve of the elections.

The first factor is leading to what in effect is much greater centralization and a kind of presidential form of government. The second factor is embittering the minorities and making them estranged from being part of the country. Both of them, in the long-run, will prove extremely divisive for the socio-political fabric of the country, exacerbate relations between the center and the States, and pave the way to disintegration. Instead of "India is Indira," the slogan should rather be "to save India, Indira must go."

Army Rule

(continued from page 3)

Gandhi's holding of elections in Assam on constitutional grounds which were conveniently brushed off by the Gandhi government in the case of Punjab and in no way posed any dilemma for the government. It was then argued in the case of Assam that the only other choice the government had was to extend the President's rule through a constitutional amendment which could have set a wrong precedent. Over 5000 people had lost their lives in rioting and police firings during and after those elections in Assam.

If the introduction of the constitutional amendment is any indication, it appears that the government does not plan to hold elections in Punjab and the army is likely to stay for a long time to come.

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INDIA NOW is published every month by IPANA, P.O. Box 665, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025, USA.

Annual subscriptions are \$10 in the US and Canada, \$16 overseas.
For institutions and libraries, subscriptions are \$16 in the US and Canada, \$20 overseas.

Correspondence from Canada and overseas should be sent to the Montreal address.

N.T. Rama Rao Dismissed

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only those officials who are willing to dance to her tune." There have been nationwide protests against the dismissal and breach of democracy (see accompanying story).

IS KARNATAKA NEXT?

Governor Ram Lal was the chief minister of Congress(I) government in Himachal Pradesh and was recently moved to Andhra as governor soon after he had to resign in the face of corruption charges. Ram Lal's action followed about 6 weeks after a similar action by another Gandhi appointee Jag Mohan who as the governor of Jammu and Kashmir dismissed the duly elected government of Dr. Farooq Abdullah of National Conference and installed instead a defector from National Conference, Ghulam Mohammad Shah as the chief minister.

Opposition parties now control only 3 states in India with Congress(I) ruling in other states. West Bengal and Tripura are being run by the left front led by CPM and the government in Karnataka is being headed by Ramakrishna Hegde of the Janata party. According to many political commentators, Gandhi may now turn her attention to Karnataka. Her party was accused last year of trying unsuccessfully to topple Hegde's government by bribing assemblymen. It has also been suspected that dismissals of governments in J&K and Andhra as well as recent cabinet shuffles by Gandhi are preparations for the forthcoming nation-wide elections; having state governments under control is considered beneficial in election campaigns and rigging of elections because government machinery can be used for partisan purposes.

Rama Rao has also been instrumental over the last two years in bringing the opposition parties together against Indira Gandhi and her party. He along with Dr. Abdullah, played leading roles in organizing opposition conclaves as well as developing a common platform of all opposition chief ministers on center-state relations.

RAMA RAO GOES TO ZAIL SINGH

After Governor Ram Lal refused to talk to Rama Rao, NTR took his supporters and 162 assemblymen to New Delhi on August 21 to meet President Zail Singh to prove that he still enjoyed majority in the state assembly which has 296 members. Rama Rao, who had been advised by medical doctors to take rest, was taken in an ambulance from the Delhi airport to the President's Mansion where his legislators showed their identity cards to Zail Singh. This unprecedented move in the Indian polity has apparently not made a dent in the decision-making process in New Delhi or Hyderabad. Rama Rao could only get the assurance from Zail Singh that he would see to it that the matters are swiftly sorted out.

After meeting with Zail Singh, Rama Rao declared to the reporters that though he was very ill, he had made up his mind not to rest till he had "saved democracy from being butchered by Gandhi." He added, "I will not rest until we succeed in dethroning the Congress government in Delhi and also puppet government of turncoats in Hyderabad, I will fight to the finish."

Rama Rao and his supporters presented 36 of 41 MLAs whose signatures were allegedly forged by Bhaskar Rao in a letter showing support of 163 MLAs to the governor. Rama Rao later accused Indira Gandhi of having offered a bribe of Rs 2.5 million to defect.

GANDHI DEFENDS RAM LAL

Around the same time, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi denied in the parliament of having any knowledge or involvement in Rama Rao's ouster by Governor Ram Lal. Gandhi defended Ram Lal's actions. The opposition termed Gandhi's statements in the parliament a great lie. Few days before NTR ministry was dismissed, Gandhi had visited the state to attend a state party meeting. A member of Gandhi's party from Bihar Kamal Nath Jha resigned in the parliament during the debate in protest against what he called inhuman and unethical dismissal of Rama Rao ministry. Opposition members walked out of parliament to protest the dismissal.

TELUGU DESAM ROUTED INDIRA CONGRESS IN ELECTIONS

Rama Rao and his party Telugu Desam won a landslide victory in January 1983 during the elections of the state assembly and has been winning most assembly and parliamentary bye-elections in the state. Telugu Desam party, which contested the election for the first time on the platform of state's honor and against corruption of Congress(I) and excessive interference of New Delhi in state affairs, got 202 out of 294 seats. Indira Congress party which had ruled the state since independence was virtually routed with its strength reduced from 250 to 60. At the same time, Indira Congress had also been defeated in Karnataka. This was the first time that Congress party lost in the two southern states which had been considered strongholds of Congress party since independence. The defeat of Indira Congress in 1983 elections was considered a big blow to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's prestige and image because she had personally campaigned during the elections.

Over A Million Protest

(continued from page 1)

secretary of Telugu Desam, Ram Lal's "forced resignation" appeared like "dropping a hot potato who had become an embarrassment to the party." Commenting on Ram Lal's resignation, Rama Rao said, "our first demand is fulfilled. Having taken a wrong decision and done injustice to the state, Lal had no option but to resign." Indira Gandhi has appointed Shankar Dayal Sharma, former Congress(I) president, as the new governor of Andhra.

Protests have continued in many places including Bihar where the government arrested over 3000 people. There have been protests in Andhra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and other parts of India ever since Rama Rao ministry was dismissed on August 16. There have been many general strikes in Andhra. According to an opposition leader George Fernandes, over 60 people have been killed and thousands injured in police firings during protest demonstrations. Paramilitary forces have been called into Andhra.

RALLY IN RAM LILA GROUNDS

The opposition parties organized a big

rally on August 22 at the Ram Lila grounds in New Delhi to protest the government's action. According to the Indian Express, it was the largest rally in opposition to Mrs Gandhi since her defeat in the 1977 parliamentary elections. It was addressed by Rama Rao and major opposition leaders in which they denounced government's actions in Kashmir, Andhra, Sikkim, Punjab and Assam. Rama Rao told the rally, "the nation will not forgive those who treat the country as their private property. The rally adopted a resolution pledging "an unrelenting battle in defense of the country's unity, integrity, and democracy and to save the nation from dynastic dictatorship."

INTERVIEW

In an interview with India Abroad, Rama Rao said from a hospital in New Delhi where he was resting that Indira Gandhi gave consent to Ram Lal to topple his ministry. Rama Rao said, "I know it was done with her full knowledge. Not only that she gave her consent to it but encouraged it. Who would believe that she did not know what was happening?

Situation in Assam

(continued from page 3)

kind of 'security' from any meaningful contact with the local public.

It is the clandestine type of the politics that thrives in such an atmosphere. All sorts of 'cultural' organizations with a plain communal message are cropping up. Indeed every caste in Assam has its own communal organization now. Saikia is doing his best to build up his image in upper Assam as an Ahom leader, and is granting all manner of Ahom communal feasts and festivals. While the majority of the people attending such meetings and rallies and festivals are innocent, there is no doubt that some of the organizers have Congress(I) links. Further, such celebrations also challenge by implication other communities to hold their own shows of communal solidarity. Jobs, contracts, official patronage—all are distributed on communal or party basis, or in return for a heavy bribe. (Rs 5000 net for a schoolmaster's job these days). The ruling party has thus spared no effort to break apart a weak nationality held together by slenderest of links. Efforts are on the way to alienate the Bodos further from the Assamese. The ethnic consciousness of Bodos at the present moment reminds one of those tribes in the Soviet Union who had been developing towards the stage of national consolidation. But the fact that they are now scattered over a wide and heterogeneous area makes it very difficult for them to meet the ultimate requirement of a nationality, i.e. a compact area. Yet the likelihood of a merger with the Assamese decreases daily. The Assamese missed the bus when they failed during the period 1950-65 to assimilate such tribal elements with a liberal social policy and with generous facilities for education in the tribal areas. As for the immigrant Muslims their terrible sufferings during the holocausts of 1980 and 1983 have simply increased their suspicions of the Hindus. A section of the Muslim elite is spreading communal ideas among them with zest, hoping for major political gains. Even the 'progressive' Muslims sometimes talk a communal language, as though Muslims can join the 'main stream' of national life only by voting in a block! As for the RSS though its formal membership has not probably increased significantly, its influence had increased immensely, thanks to tactics of infiltration and propaganda it has perfected over the decades. And this does not cause any surprise among the educated. So much for our secularism.

ASSAM MOVEMENT

As the rifts and divisions among the people thus widen, even the Assam movement, which could at one time rally at short notice hundreds of thousands of militant men and women, seems in some danger of going over to the side of the

Indian big business lobby and the ruling party. Outwardly, the leaders seem as firm in their opposition to the Center as ever. The prestige of the student leaders has suffered some erosion, but it is still quite high. But there are all kinds of most disturbing rumors afloat, not all of which can be dismissed. In fact, as early as May, 1980, I had predicted in the pages of Economic and Political Weekly that the top stratum of the Assamese middle class would use the mass movement to clinch a fresh deal with big capital and its political agents. Once that is through, they would of course steer the movement to a tame end. I was probably being too hasty in my judgement in 1980. But there is no doubt that such an effort is going on now. Some of the rumors say that Army Intelligence which has a center near the Gauhati University campus, the nerve-center of the Assam movement, has at last penetrated the AASU leaders, who see to it that for all the fiery speeches and statements no serious action takes place. There are reports of secret talks with the representatives of the Central Home department, which are vehemently denied by the AASU leaders. The rumors have it that the discussions in those secret parleys deal more with the future career of the AASU leaders than with the future of the Assamese nationality! There is concurrently a great deal of legal activity, including the touring of State by an unofficial commission inquiring into the 1983 catastrophe. This is supposed by hostile critics to be a legal method of letting off steam, so that a more militant and aggressive movement cannot get off the ground. Meanwhile, a powerful section of the local press has begun chanting "Hiteswar Saikia is good, Indira Gandhi is bad," though they do not mention the fact that Saikia flies to Delhi on the average twice a month to receive instruction from the same Indira Gandhi. Even the most bitter critic of Saikia among the papers have now started getting full-page advertisements of the Progress made by Assam under a grinning photograph of Saikia. It is therefore difficult indeed to dismiss such rumors of a rotten deal.

excerpted from Frontier

Hegde Expands Ministry

Karnataka Chief Minister Ramakrishna Hegde reshuffled his 20-month old Janata ministry by dropping 3 members and adding 15. According to political observers, this move of Hegde is an attempt to consolidate his support and to guard against any defections being conspired by Indira Congress to topple his ministry as it has been done in Jammu and Kashmir and Andhra. BM Mujahid, who is not a member of the legislature, and has been nominated to be a cabinet rank minister, did not show up at the swearing in ceremony. Hegde told a press conference later that Indira Congress was trying to dissuade and prevent Mujahid from accepting the offer and creating confusion.

Later Hegde told the Indian Express that because of the nation-wide expression on the resentment over the dismissal of the Telugu Desam government in Andhra, Congress(I) leadership would probably exercise caution about attempting similar operations in opposition-ruled states including Karnataka. Hegde went on to add that the fortunes of the Congress has nosedived since the Andhra operation. The newspaper quoted Congress sources saying that Andhra move had boomeranged on the party and "if Hegde is dislodged at this juncture, the consequences would be grave."

Apparently Karnataka Kranti Ranga leader S. Bangarappa had gone to New Delhi to meet Indira Gandhi and other Congress(I) leaders reportedly seeking their permission for a toppling operation in Karnataka; he however reportedly returned empty-handed.

ERRATUM

The names of the authors, Kishan Bajwa and V. Kumar, of the articles on Punjab and Kashmir in the Special Summer Issue of India Now, were inadvertently omitted. The error is regretted.

Sweet Jail: An Immigrant Story

Ketu H. Katrak

SWEET JAIL: THE SIKHS OF YUBA CITY is an ethnographic documentary film by Beheroze F. Shroff. Born in Bombay, Shroff came to the US in 1975 after completing an MA in English literature at the University of Bombay. She completed a second Masters' degree in English at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and later changed to the Film Program. She is currently in the Masters of Arts program at UCLA.

The film explored the immigrant experience of acculturation and assimilation over three generations of Sikhs from 1920 to the present time. Shroff very successfully focuses on the history of one family which serves as a typical example of the experiences of many other immigrant families in California and elsewhere in the US. With an obviously feminist bent, Shroff sensitively probes the life stories of three Sikh women maturing in the predominantly agricultural area of Yuba City — Nand Kaur Singh, now 77, the first Punjabi woman to come to Yuba city in 1923, and her two daughters, the eldest growing up in the 1930's and 1940's and the youngest in the 1950's and 1960's. This vast time spectrum is encapsulated vividly through the lived histories of these women who speak in their own voice while the filmmaker remains mostly un-

tural heritage. The film captures many warm scenes between the women working together during the community prepared meals in the gurdwara, speaking in Punjabi, dressed in traditional salwar-khameez.

Nand Kaur's grandson seemed the most alienated from his Punjabi roots, almost hostile to the newer immigrants, who are, according to him, "the village type of people" and who have "a certain odor to them." The film subtly dramatizes the conflicts that he and his wife, partners in an arranged marriage, face: "We did not love each other. We didn't even know each other when we got married ... I married an East Indian girl for my mother. That is the only thing my mother ever asked of me."

SWEET JAIL is structured and edited in the ethnographic documentary style in which the tale is told and seen through the eyes of the three women narrators as they lead us through various locales — the homes of the new immigrants, the gurdwara and its role in the community, the laborers' camps, the home of a white farm-owner.

The individual lives of the people we get to know and care for in the film are skillfully ensconced within a historical



obtrusive.

Nand Kaur's colorful words open the film as we follow the camera panning the lush orchard landscape of Yuba City. "Everyone comes to America to make money. That's why they come first when they come," she remarks in a language she taught herself when she first came to the US at age 17. Nand Kaur comments on how most immigrants come with the intention of staying for a couple of years, minting money and returning home. However, recalling her husband's apt words, she adds, "California is a sweet jail. You stay here one year, you stay for the rest of your life. You get stuck, just like a honey bee stuck to the honey." Within the context of this graphic image "sweet jail," the film explores the manifold struggles that immigrants faced from the early 1900's — loneliness, discrimination, the Asiatic Exclusion League, The California Land Law, language barriers, general differences in social codes, dress and moral values.

After spending more years of her life in the US than in India, Nand Kaur now feels a stronger sense of her roots and identity as an Indian than her children who grew up in the US and who are more integrated into the life-style here. Nand Kaur had to radically transform her life when after an arranged marriage, she left her home in a small village in Punjab and followed her husband to the US. "My husband didn't let me wear Punjabi clothes (when I came in 1923)," she reminisces. "He said you are the only lady wearing one kind of clothes. People gonna throw rock at you. So, I wore western clothes." Now since the 1970's, the Sikh community has grown to about 5000 in the predominantly white community of about 20,000 in Yuba city. As the newer immigrants bring their traditional way from the old country, women of Nand Kaur's generation and younger women are bonded together in their common cul-

ture. An individual life evokes the history of the time as the history itself illuminates the particularity of the individual experience. **SWEET JAIL** moves with ease between the past and the present through a constructive use of photographic images which captures both the personal life stories of Nand Kaur and her family, as well as the Sikh community as a whole. For instance, the Gadar Party in the 1930's and 1940's in fighting for Indian independence from the British is discussed in relations to Nand Kaur's and her husband's commitment to the Gadar ideology. As our eyes traverse old photographs of Gadar meetings, Nand Kaur enacts the spirited phase of Indian Nationalism (pre 1947) through Gadar songs exalting revolution and denouncing the British presence in India.

From the past to the present, the film brings us up to date, as Shroff explores the plight of the newest immigrants, many of whom enter illegally, live in laborers' camps and constantly dread the US immigration authorities. In a very moving interview with about 10 laborers, Shroff perceptively draws out the precarious nature of their lives in a foreign country, the many reasons behind their venturing into this land. The camera follows the laborers from dawn as they prepare their chapattis and vegetables for lunch, as they sharpen their farm implements, as they work in the fields, as they sit together and share their lunch under a shady tree, as they return home after a twelve-hour day.

Both the cinematography by Lindy Laub — particularly a wedding sequence in the gurdwara, the women working together in the temple kitchen, intimate family scenes with Nand Kaur's family — and the editing by Shroff are highly imaginative and artistic.

SWEET JAIL lingers in the viewer's (continued on page 10)

Karlovy Vary Award for Om Puri

Noted Hindi film star Om Puri won the best actor award at the International Film Festival in Karlovy Vary. He was cited for his performance in Govind Nihalani's film "Ardh Satya."

This is Om Puri's first international award and he is the third Indian to have won the acting honors at Karlovy Vary, the others being Prithvi Raj Kapoor in "Aasman Mahal" and Nargis in "Mother India."

Magsaysay Award to Cartoonist Laxman

Renowned cartoonist RK Laxman has been chosen to receive the 1984 Ramon Magsaysay award for journalism, literature and creative communication. The citation called 58 year old Laxman as India's premier newspaper cartoonist and praised his "incisive, witty, never malicious cartoons illuminating India's political and social issues."

A 44-year-old rural credit worker Kummud Yunus of Bangladesh will receive the award for community leadership. Yunus was cited for "enabling the neediest rural men and women to make themselves productive with sound group-managed credit."

The award which is named after the former Philippine President includes a gold medallion and \$20,000.

Floods Kill Hundreds and Affect Millions

According to the government sources, floods, torrential rain, and landslides have killed 424 people and 19,033 heads of cattle in 13 states in the last four-and-a-half months. The floods have affected 23.7 million people and 15.86 million acres of land, including 9.14 million acres of cropland. A total of about half a million houses have been damaged. Rice, jute, wheat, cotton, oil seeds, pulse, and tea were among the worst affected crops.

In the year ended March, at least 2,383 people and 160,703 cattle were killed by heavy floods, according to ministry sources.

In UP, 138 people were killed during this season and 5.3 million affected. Floods damaged 16,000 houses and 2 million acres of cropland.

In neighboring Bangladesh, over 1000 people have died of recent floods that also affected Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and other parts of North-East India. According to the Minister of State for Relief and Rehabilitation in Bihar, over 8 million people in over 7000 villages have been badly affected in Bihar. Over 60,000 houses and crops worth Rs 720 million have been damaged.

Floods and heavy rains in north-eastern states of Assam and Tripura have killed over 100 people. About 1 million people have been affected there so far with over 100,000 becoming homeless. Overflowing rivers have flooded many villages and over 100 villages have been submerged in water.

Garment Curbs: India Wins Case Against US

The Textile Surveillance Body of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) has ruled in favor of the Indian government in its case against the US government on restraints imposed on the entry of certain categories of Indian garments into the US markets. The body has asked the US to rescind the quotas on men's and boys' jackets and men's and women's sweaters.

The textile trade with the US is regulated by a bilateral agreement negotiated under the multi-fiber arrangement which brings 6 items of garments under specific limitations. There is also an overall group ceiling of 100 million square yard equivalent for all garments. US proceeded to take action against the import from about 20 countries including India in 1984 just as exports to the US were going up.

India exported garments worth Rs 2.84 billion to the US in 1983 and their value has already reached Rs 2.18 billion by May, 1984. India fully utilized the group quota of 100 million sq. yard equivalent in 1983 and is likely to go up by 7% in 1984.

National Film Awards

Adi Shankaracharya, a Sanskrit film directed by GV Iyer and produced by the National Film Development Corporation, won the best feature film award for this year. Maya Mirigya, in Oriya, directed by Nirad N. Mohapatra, received the second best feature film award. Nargis Dutt Award for best feature film on national integration went to Sookha in Hindi produced and directed by MS Sathyu, who also directed Garm Hawa.

Noted film director Mrinal Sen got the best direction award for his Hindi film "Khandhar." Shabana Azmi received the best actress award whereas Om Puri won the best actor award.


Best first film of a director award went to a Hindi film "Jane Bhi Do Yaroo" directed by Kundan Shah. Govind Nihalani's Ardh Satya was considered the best feature film in Hindi. The best feature film in Tamil was judged to be Oru Indiya Kanavu.

A CONVENTION TO DISCUSS PUNJAB SITUATION

Progressive cultural activist and the editor of Punjabi monthly 'Samta', Sardar Gursharan Singh of the Amritsar Natak Kala Kendar, organized a convention on August 19 in Jullundur to discuss the Punjab situation. The announcement for the convention called for the withdrawal of army rule in Punjab, end to communal tension, and urged people to maintain communal harmony and struggle against dictatorial laws which are a direct attack on the democratic rights.

Gursharan Singh also supported a call for the formation of a Punjab People's Forum which will be a common platform of all people of Punjab, raise issues and demands of Punjab, demand immediate end of the army rule and repealing of all black laws in Punjab.

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